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Heterodox forms of university ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure

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HETERODOX FORMS OF UNIVERSITY OWNERSHIP/CONTROL, GOVERNANCE, FINANCING AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

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Abstract

This study explores heterodox forms of higher education institutions in the context of the intensification of neoliberal forms in the UK and Australia. It aims to understand how heterodox forms might enhance students' educational experiences, in which under-privileged students will be recipients of higher education at no cost to them.

Students have been recast as customers who must pay for their education and a debt crisis is being created among young people who are made to carry, what I refer to as, an 'educational mortgage' throughout their adult life. The situation is even more burdensome for students from under-privileged backgrounds whose debts will continue to accumulate with interest as they take a longer time to repay the debt than their more affluent fellow students.

An interpretivist approach to data collection was adopted. Interviews were conducted with eight senior executives and government officials in contemporary public higher education institutions in the UK and Australia to gain insight into the market model that is being adopted and its impact on students' experiences. Case-studies were also undertaken of four alternative higher education institutions in the US, Europe and Asia, to gain an in-depth understanding of their forms of ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure and the ways in which students' experiences in these alternative models differed from the mainstream. The findings revealed that students democratically participated in governance and operations of two institutions as beneficial owners, while students took ownership of curriculum design in one

institution. Two institutions provided students with a free tuition education while students participated in a labour/work programme in all institutions.

The study concludes with a conceptual framework of a heterodox higher education institution model and proposes a hybrid of a cooperative and trust, as provided in Chapter 7, that will be owned and operated by students, academics and other stakeholders in a democratic process, and in which students will be integrally involved in the process of their education and in curriculum development. This research therefore, contributes to the body of knowledge on alternative forms of higher education institutions and on-going efforts aimed at addressing issues of access to higher education for students from under-privileged backgrounds. It also has practical significance for education policy.

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List of Abbreviations

ACT	American College Testing
AUC	Australian Universities Grant Commission
BIS	Department for Business Innovation and Skills
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BOT	Board of Trustees
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHERI	Centre for Higher Education Research and Information
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DSC	Deep Springs College
EEP	Employability Enhancement Programme
EFC	Expected Family Contribution
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	European Statistics Office
HE	Higher Education
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HELP	Higher Education Loan Programme
HEPI	Higher Education Policy Institute
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IFS	Institute of Fiscal Studies
JLP	John Lewis Partnership
NIAD-UE	National Institution for Academic Degrees & Quality Enhancement of Higher Education
NUS	National Union of Students
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OfS	Office for Students
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
RPI	Retail Price Index
SES	Socio-economic Status
SGA	Student Government Association

SLC	Student Loans Company
SRA	Social Research Association
UCL	University College of London
UGC	Universities Grant Commission/Universities Grant Committee
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
US	United States of America

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Dedication

The study is dedicated to the many young people around the world, particularly from under-represented backgrounds who have continued to be hopeful of a better future and for an opportunity to earn a higher education without fear of a crippling debt burden. Likewise, for all those crusaders who have remained resolute in advocating for alternative models of higher education institutions, and in the belief that education is a fundamental right of everyone and not a privilege for the few.

Chapter 1

Another World is Possible

*In an age where community involvement and partnerships with civil society are increasingly being recognized as indispensable, there is clearly a growing potential for cooperative development and renewal worldwide (*Kofi Annan, 2002)

Globalization has not only lost its promise but is embittering many. The forces representing human solidarity and community have no choice but to step in quickly to convince the disenchanted masses that, as the banner of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre proclaims, 'Another world is possible!' (Walden Bello, 2003)

1.1 An Auto-Ethnographic Prologue

It is 2004, and I am sitting in my office on a 238 square mile Caribbean island, performing my managerial duties as outlined in my job description. I had tried for several years to pursue a Masters' degree, but the cost of doing so was prohibitive. So, I had given up on the idea of ever finding a way out. Suddenly, the stars began to shine on me; Coventry University in the UK was offering Masters' degree scholarships to Caribbean professionals in my field of communications. My organisation enrolled me on the course and I soon discovered that the scholarship was also extended to other international students from as far afield as South America and Africa.

One might wonder why a modestly-ranked UK University like Coventry was recruiting international students. The answer seems to lie in the globalisation of higher education (HE) with universities now operating in a global competitive business environment. In order to compete and survive, they engage in aggressive campaigns to penetrate non-

traditional markets to increase their income and improve their world ranking in university league tables. I am eternally grateful to Coventry University for this opportunity provided and the quality of education offered was very high. The question arises: What about the thousands of students globally who are not as fortunate as I was and have to fund themselves?

My son is a case in point. The time came in 2012 for him to pursue undergraduate studies. In 2010 he and I began the process of identifying suitable UK universities for him to attend. He holds a British passport and is a UK citizen. Our search revealed that UK home students were paying £3,000 a year in fees, whilst international students had to pay just a little over £5,000 per year. Because he had been living outside the UK for more than three years, we were informed by his universities of choice that he would have to complete an Assessment of Fee Status Form to determine whether he should be charged as an EU/UK student (home student) or a non-EU student (international). After the assessment, it was determined that he was a non-EU student. I thought, £5000 was manageable and I would finance him as I was in full-time employment. In 2011, the bombshell came, in that international students' fees had skyrocketed. While home students' fees had increased by 300% to a cap of £9,000, non-EU students had to pay a little over £10,000 to £18,000 annually and as much as £24,000 for a law degree.

Because of his excellent grades in the Caribbean Examination Council, my son was awarded a scholarship by the university he chose, which brought the fees down to less than £9,000 a year. Other options were explored and applications were submitted to four different universities in the US. He was offered scholarships in the amount of about US$12,000 a year, but the net cost of tuition fees was still between US$28,000

and US$45,000 a year. The total cost of my son's tuition fees alone for attending university in the UK (for a three year period) and the US (four years) would range between £27,000 and £52,000 respectively, exclusive of other expenses.

When the additional costs such as accommodation are added, it may well cost an international student between £69,000 and £91,000 to pursue undergraduate studies in these two developed countries. My son, who is 22 years old, now carries a substantial student loan of £45,000 plus an additional £32,000 in accumulated interest, which he has to repay on completion of his three years study. Such a significant debt might be thought of as an education mortgage.

My son is not alone in this struggle. Many students and their parents are burdened with huge student loans (McGettigan, 2013; Newfield, 2008), which in some cases they are unable to repay. The situation is even more unpropitious for poorer families who would like to provide their children with a higher education but are unable to do so because of the high cost of a university education. The annual median household income in 2016 for a family in the UK was £27,300 (UK Office for National Statistics 2018); in the US it was £45,000 (US Census Bureau 2017) and for the small Caribbean island of Saint Lucia it is £17,000 (Central Statistical Office of St. Lucia, 2017/2018).

These figures suggest that students from average income households will leave university with very substantial debts. Higher education is considered to be a fundamental right for all as provided in Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights (Toprak, 2006), but at best, providers often prioritise securing funding (King, Marginson and Naidoo, 2011) and at worst are significantly profit-driven (Carnoy,

2000; Mok and Welch, 2003; Morey, 2004). This poses something of a conflict – whether the legitimate expectations of individuals with regard to education can be delivered in the context of such profit-seeking commercial activity.

This thesis explores the possibility of heterodox higher education institutional forms of ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure that are rooted in social economy enterprises like cooperatives, mutual and trusts societies. It also reflects on how this heterodox model might provide a different educational experience for students in terms of access to HE and improvement in pedagogy. Many young people particularly from under-privileged backgrounds have gone through their young life hearing that the key to success is education and so, many have dreamt of the prospect of a higher education that will liberate them from poverty (Gomez, 2015) and set them on a path to making a real difference in the world. For many who were able to access higher education prior to the 1990s, they may have realised that ambition by receiving a completely free education or having had to pay a nominal fee (Chapman, 2001; Greenaway and Haynes, 2003). However, with so much uncertainty in the future of the hegemonic orthodox university characterised by a market-oriented approach (Cato and Heatley, 2012), I argue that for many young people today, their vision of accessing HE will remain nothing more than a dream because of the cost implications of attending HE, and also the desire of many students to gain employment (Mourshed, Farrell and Barton, 2013).

In this research, I set out to gather 'resources of hope' (Kenway, Boden and Fahey, 2014) from existing literature and 'spaces of hope' (Kenway, Boden and Fahey, 2014), practical examples of non-market forms, and mainstream those deviances, with the

possibility of providing a heterodox model that might provide hope to the under-privileged groups in society through policy mutation rather than policy diffusion since no one size fits all. In other words, this research will explore how these 'resources of hope' could travel from one location to another, not necessarily to replace the existing orthodox model but to work alongside as an alternative to the dominant orthodox model. In the next section I discuss the terms orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

1.2 Orthodoxes versus Heterodoxes

Orthodoxy

For the purpose of this thesis, orthodox refers to a general conformity towards neoliberal practices which seem to imply a form of global institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 2000) in contemporary higher education. Conversely, heterodox is defined as a deviance from the orthodox way of doing things (Lavoie, 2006; Lawson, 2005). It does not belong to the public sector or the private sector, but belongs to what is referred to as the third sector or social economy (Archambault, 2009; Moulaert and Ailenei, 2005). The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2015) also defines heterodox as "contrary to or different from an acknowledged standard or a traditional form".

My story outlined above suggests that universities are increasingly becoming financialised businesses (Meek and Hayden, 2005) and higher education a highly priced commodity (Naidoo, 2003; Teferra and Knight, 2008) rather than a form of collective

public good (Kezar, Chambers, and Burkhardt, 2015). This makes it difficult for students - particularly the underprivileged - to access higher education.

Currently, the system of higher education the world over is said to be more heterogeneous than ever before (Teichler, 2004) with the advent of community and private colleges, public and private universities, technical colleges, for-profit universities and liberal arts colleges and universities in some jurisdictions. However, there appears to be a high degree of homogeneity and orthodoxy in the way the governance structure of these diverse public institutions, in particular, is being replaced by a neo-liberal finance logic and policy perspective.

As public funding for higher education becomes scare, what appears to be happening is that providers compete with each other for scarce resources. They contend for the same resources and global prestige (Marginson, 2009) and in the same market. The end result is a neo-Tayloristic model (Jemielniak and Greenwood, 2013) of standardized teaching and learning that is expected to improve quality (Sahlberg, 2004). There have been concerns that making schools more accountable to the public have not improved the quality of education as expected (Sahlberg 2004:79).

According to the literature, the reforms in higher education are marked by three major themes: commercialisation (Bok, 2009; Willmott, 2003) whereby money becomes an imperative driver (Levidow, 2002); massification, especially of international students (Guri-Rosenblit, Šebková, and Teichler, 2007); and globalization of higher education (Mok and Tan, 2004; Mok and Welch, 2003) by which universities venture out into non-traditional overseas territories to compete on a more global scale. For the purpose

of this thesis massification refers to the large-scale recruitment of students by educational institutions particularly for the purpose of selling their brand and raising income. The aforementioned trends have driven change at the institutional level, which will be addressed later in this chapter. Globalisation refers to the marketisation and trade in international students and higher education services across borders as universities intensify competition (Van Vught, Van Der Wende and Westerheijden, 2002). According to Rizvi (2000 in Rhee and Sagaria, 2004), international students have become "a new global generation" (p. 79). Globalisation has also had profound effects on the higher education system as it accelerates education reforms around the globe leading to a diminishing role of nation-states and loss of their sovereignty (Naidoo, 2011; Sahlberg, 2004).

Universities have thereby taken on a new configuration in what Wang (2010) refers to as a global trend. This is characterised by finance-driven reforms (Goedegebuure, Hayden and Meek, 2009) emphasising decentralisation, privatisation and better performance (Carnoy, 2000; McGettigan, 2013; Mok and Welch, 2003), as these institutions grow isomorphically (DiMaggio and Powell, 2000) and expand internationally in an increasingly competitive environment and in what might be seen as a process of educational colonialism.

These changes originated largely in response to neoliberal drives to reduce state funding by enlarging private markets and a related policy push to make universities more accountable and transparent (Hoecht, 2006), and better aligned to the needs of the so-called knowledge economy. Yet the reverse seem to have taken effect since the masses have been excluded from higher education on an 'ability to pay' basis, in what appears

to be "an issue of social justice in public higher education" (Hargreaves 2003). Employers demand skilled graduates (Bennett, 2002; Hernández-March, Martín del Peso and Leguey, 2009) but are decreasingly willing to pay for the cost of training. At the same time, governments endeavour to reduce expenditure on education. A ready policy answer has been found in the principles of human capital theory (Becker, 2009) in which young people are encouraged to invest in their capacity for future earnings by upgrading their skills (Wright, 2015). The concept of human capital is thought to arise out of any activity that is likely to raise worker productivity and the thinking is that 'personal incomes are likely to vary according to the amount of investment in human capital' (Becker, 2009; Mincer, 1958). A further expectation is that investment in human capital equips the labour force with the skills-base necessary for economic growth (ibid). Public universities are now expected to play their part in this process by creating employable graduates for a fee (Boden and Nedeva, 2010; Brown, Lauder and Ashton, 2011).

In Australia and the UK, 'students-as-customers' (Guilbault, 2016; Schwartzman, 1995) have been encouraged to see themselves as investors in a project of the self, as universities became incentivised to hike tuition fees in an effort to secure funding to sustain themselves organisationally. International students have emerged as a new niche market since they appear to be more lucrative in terms of fee income than home-based students (Meek and Hayden, 2005) and as argued by Kelly (2012), students are now under the power of those who control the issuance of credit, and the oligarchy of higher education institutions. This means that as universities gain more autonomy and transition to centralised managerial-corporate structures, students become powerless because their future lie in the hands of the few who control these higher education

institutions. Meanwhile students' loan financing become burdensome (Kelly, 2012) as private lending institutions cash in on this profitable guaranteed student loans market.

These reforms have had, and may continue to have if not addressed, substantial effects on students in terms of access and pedagogy as knowledge is increasingly perceived in economic terms (Gyamera, 2013). The effects of these changes, the literature suggests, are the indebtedness of students, homogenisation of curricula and the growth of education imperialism (De Witt, 2009; Rizvi and Walsh, 1998). Increasingly, higher education is beyond the reach of the average student simply because they cannot afford to pay for their education (Newfield, 2008). Most of those who can 'afford' education do so through the accumulation of substantial debt (McGettigan, 2013) referred to by Williams (2006), as a pedagogy of debt.

Higher education reforms have also impacted on academics' identities: it is argued that institutional reforms have created a change in the way academics think about what they do, their participation in new courses and forms of pedagogy and their knowledge production (Ball, 2012). According to Hargreaves (2003), in Sahlberg (2004), "education reforms have led to standardisation, commercialised teaching, learning for tests and external control that has casualised teachers in many countries rather than empowered them to teach better" (p.77). This then raises a deeper concern that has to do with pedagogy and what students learn in an environment of mistrust (Tierney, 2006). Mistrust relates to academics who are doubtful of a higher education system in which it is perceived that their innovation is being stifled and academic standards threatened (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005; Vidovich and Currie, 2011).

As public higher education has become increasingly marketised (Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion, 2009), so has the process of massification been intensified. Massification in richer countries is being fuelled by a financial incentive to meet increasing demand for higher education from regions such as the Asia-Pacific, China, India, South East Asia and South America. Massification is also associated with a shift from collectivist funding through taxation (which constrains participation via public spending limits), to individualised funding by students and the drive by universities to increase market share and revenues. According to the 2009 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education report, there are approximately 150.6 million tertiary students in the world (Altbach et al., 2009) and it has been predicted that the total global demand for international student places will double by 2025, reaching approximately 8 million (Stremba, 2014).

Coughlan, (2008) suggests that there is a perception amongst students that their education is about making money for universities:

> "UK Universities have accused essay writing firms of fuelling plagiarism. But a spokesman for UKEssays.com says the rise in demand is caused by universities recruiting students with inadequate English language skills. "It's another example of universities turning into businesses. They're happy to get the fees from overseas students - but they don't provide enough language support," (Jed Hallam, quoted by Coughlan, 2008). The rise in students buying essays, according to Hallam reflects the number of overseas students studying in the UK with "very poor written and verbal skills" (Coughlan, 2008; Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion, 2009).

Universities have sought to take advantage of the increased demand for higher education and generate revenue, by venturing out into international markets. Some have set up branch campuses overseas, mainly in the Asia-Pacific region and Australia,

which I argue is a 21st century form of colonisation of developing countries (Gomez, 2015). It is estimated that there are more than 200 international branch campuses set up by universities around the globe (Wildavsky, 2010). Globalisation has also transformed the landscape of higher education as there is a continuous and unprecedented increase in student mobility across the globe and the widespread movement of faculty, who migrate from their home country to seek employment overseas (Boden and Epstein, 2006).

Globalisation, according to Altbach (2002), refers to 'trends in higher education that have cross-national implications. These include mass higher education; a global marketplace for students, faculty and highly educated personnel; and the global reach of the new internet-based technologies' (p. 29). The role of globalisation in higher education has been the subject of much debate in the academic literature (Rizvi and Walsh, 1998; Vidovich, 2002; Wang, 2010) and the argument has been advanced that 'governments continue to shape policies to promote, control and maximise returns from market forces in international settings, while abandoning some of the core discourses and functions of the welfare state' (Naidoo, 2011:41).

The governance and financing of public universities continue to shift and the burden of financing has been shifted to students, making the widening of educational access to under-privileged social groups a significant challenge (Newfield, 2003; 2008; Burke, 2013). This raises concerns of social justice (Burke, 2013; Hargreaves, 2003) and exclusivity (Lall and Nambissan, 2011; Gyamera, 2013) in higher education. The shift in tuition fees from the government to students has had far reaching implications for the UK government (Wright 2015). Public universities were assured that the increase

in students' fees from £3000 to £9000 would result in a savings to the Treasury of £3 billion in grants annually by 2014/2015, and would provide them with a secure income flow provided that these institutions are able to compete to attract students (BIS, 2011:15). However, "less than 2 years into its implementation, the £9,000 tuition fee hike had already resulted in an unprecedented default on student loans pushing the write-off cost from an estimated 28% by government in 2010 to 45%. This resulted in the addition of an estimated £50 - £100 billion to the national debt as a consequence of the UK government's borrowing for on-lending to students, as demand for student loans increased (Wright, 2015). Nick Hillman, former political advisor to the Tory universities Minister David Willetts, was even driven to admit "that the government 'got its maths wrong' and may well end up with a zero financial reward" (The Guardian, 21 March 2014).

Massification and globalisation have the potential to drive universities to mass produce and package knowledge (curriculum) itself for a wider market which might not necessarily be relevant to the local needs of the host countries (Gomez, 2015; Ishengoma, 2003). In fact, massification and globalisation may result in pedagogies and curricula design being homogenized to satisfy a growing student market but which might only serve to devalue the student experience. Globalisation further leads to a 'MacDonaldization' of the educational experience as coined by Ritzer (1998), since the message being conveyed by higher educational institutions is that one size fits all.

Globalisation of higher education has also resulted in a widening of international economic inequalities (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery, 2009) as poorer countries are disadvantaged due to the vast number of students who take large sums of money from

their local economies to invest in richer countries in exchange for a better education. The ability of richer countries to attract highly skilled graduates, academics, and researchers for economic gain also creates a brain drain (Altbach and Teichler, 2001; Teferra and Knight, 2008; Ishengoma, 2003) on already struggling economies that are losing these valuable skills to richer nations.

Heterodoxy

The orthodoxies that have just been described are the probabilities that suggest what is occurring in modern day higher education and the direction in which public universities are headed. A change can only take place to make these probabilities possibilities. Heterodox has been used widely in 20th century economic terms to refer to alternative approaches or non-orthodox schools of thought that have opposed mainstream neoclassical orthodox economics (Lavoie, 2006), and that sought to examine the influence of social factors on market equilibrium (Lawson, 2005; Lee, 2009). The term, however, does not exclude other disciplines (Hess, 1992).

The argument advanced in this thesis rests on an exploration of the dynamics of the impact of higher education reforms on students and their educational experiences in terms of access to higher education, and the declining quality of the pedagogy (Burke, Crozier et al., 2013; Scott, Yeld and Hendry, 2007; Williams, 2013). Merely to critique the status quo is not sufficient, as there is already much that has been documented in literature on these reforms and their effects on students. The central purpose of the thesis is to explore whether or not heterodox forms of university configuration might offer distinct and more useful types of student educational experiences.

There has been much debate on policy travel/mobility (Dale and Robertson 2012; Peck and Theodore 2010) in higher education, whereby governments in many parts of the world have borrowed from each other in developing policies to shape and rank the performance of their universities (Wright, Curtis, Lucas and Robertson, 2015). It is a well-recognised process by which neoliberal policies have continued to spread around the world. As mentioned earlier, while there continue to be heterogeneity in higher education, operating alongside is a pervasive hegemonic force that has become the product of policy isomorphism and policy diffusion.

At the same time students are made casualties of neoliberal policies in terms of low access to higher education, high tuition cost and the quality of pedagogy (Levidow, 2002). This, therefore, prompts the consideration of new imaginaries; but in order to identify these new imaginaries there is need to be hopeful and to seek 'resources of hope' as argued by Kenway, Boden and Fahey (2014) and ''spaces of hope', that could be used to develop a heterodox university model - a non-neoliberal university - that might achieve differently constituted educational experiences to the benefit of students and staff and for building socially just societies. A model that will recognise faculty, students and stakeholders as collaborative and equal partners in the governance structure, rather than mere wage workers and customers in university life (Jemielniak and Greenwood, 2013).

In contrast to the pseudo-business model increasingly adopted by universities, there are social economy models of ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure available largely from the world outside of higher education. In my experience as an academic speaking at international conferences and workshops during the conduct

of this research, one common theme is that many of my colleagues were unaware of the concept of a "social economy". The lack of awareness about the fact that heterodox approaches could be found among the social economy made it challenging to conceive of new imaginaries beyond the orthodox hegemonic model for reconfiguring higher education.

If the current university form is based on the market as suggested in the literature (Baldwin and James, 2000), then exploring the features of social economies as a different way of organising the university provides renewed hope that a different world is possible by turning around the impossible. As put forward by Gibson-Graham (2006), 'hope is the difference between probability and possibility'. These social economy enterprise forms (which will be discussed further in Chapter 3) are often manifested in the third sector such as co-operatives, trust, mutual and worker-owned organisations as depicted in Figure 1.1 but the forms can be, and are, heterogeneous. They are often seen as particularly suited to meeting social needs and building stronger socio-economic communities (Gibson-Graham, 2006). The primary aim is not financial or profit motivated but satisfying common goals. Such alternatives to current university forms are already being mooted (Boden, Ciancanelli and Wright, 2012; Cato and Heatley, 2012; Cook, 2013; Neary and Winn, 2017; Winn, 2015; Woodin and Lucas, 2004; Yeo, 2014; Wright and Greenwood, 2017) and this thesis aims to contribute significantly to that work.

Having gathered these 'resources of hope' (Kenway, Boden and Fahey, 2014) – models, forms, new imaginations – from the literature, I will explore in this thesis, the feasibility of the proposed heterodox model in a major university system. Australia and the UK

have been selected as two neoliberal systems to be examined. The reason for selecting these two sites is that this thesis is part of a wider UNIKE (Universities in the Knowledge Economy) project under the Marie Curie Initial Training Programme and I hope to contribute to the collective endeavour of that project as well as to benefit from the work of the other PhD fellows on the project.

Figure 1.1 - Interrelationship among Social Economy Enterprises and their Characteristics

One of the challenges faced in imagining different heterodox university forms, is the hegemony of the business model and the absence of any blueprint of alternatives to draw upon. A contribution of the thesis is the assembly of a suite of theoretical resources, models, practical examples and experiences that may have significance for education policy in the UK and Australia as well as in other parts of the world. It is the expectation that in any given location, this might be used imaginatively to build new forms of ownership/control, governance, organisation and funding of universities suited

to local community needs; (Ishengoma, 2003) in ways that facilitate the rethinking of pedagogies (Fullan, 2005; Hargraves, 2003; Sahlberg, 2004), alongside addressing issues of cost and widening educational access (Burke, 2002; Newfield, 2008). Therefore the approach undertaken in this thesis is the collection and collation of available examples of social economy forms, both theoretical and practical, and to consider and explore how these might be developed into new forms for higher education.

1.3 Research Questions

The central aim of this thesis is to explore heterodox forms of higher education institutions in the context of the intensification of the neoliberal forms in the UK and Australia. It is anticipated that education could take place more collaboratively with a greater focus on under-privileged students and with the active participation of students, faculty and workers in institutional governance and operations.

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Given that the hegemonic form of higher education institutions globally is increasingly business-oriented and managerial in structure, the heterodox forms considered are those of social economy enterprises such as co-operatives, trusts, mutual, worker-owned. These differ in the primary aspects of ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational form from the majority of mainstream universities globally.

The principal research question is:

> How do heterodox higher education institutional forms differ from orthodox higher education institutional forms in relation to

ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure?

The principal aim of this question will be addressed using three subsidiary questions. The first is:

What are the current forms of university ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure in the UK and Australia?

There will be a mapping of the key aspects of university organisational forms, understanding their inter-linkages, trajectories and drivers and the extent to which these are typical of global trends.

The second subsidiary question is:

What are the consequences of these regimes for student access and experiences?

By addressing this subsidiary question, clarity will be given to the impact of the organisational form on educational experiences and, most crucially for the thesis, understand the dynamics of how one affects the other.

The third subsidiary question is:

What alternative models of ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure might be constituted into new higher education institutional forms and how might these enhance students' experiences?

In addressing this question there is need to investigate existing social economy models and consider how these might be or have been translated into higher educational institutions. The research will explore how and why these heterodox forms might lead to different experiences for students.

1.4 Approach to Answering the Questions

In this research I set out to identify 'spaces of hope' (Kenway, Boden and Fahey, 2014) from among existing social economy enterprises operating in the higher education context in Europe, India and the US where they exist. The aim of the empirical work was to explore these social economy enterprises and evaluate what 'resources' they offer for building local, context-specific social economy higher education institutions and to consider the extent to which such heterodox forms might offer different sorts of educational experiences in terms of access and pedagogy. The next step was to test the usefulness of this new imagination in major universities in two country contexts - Australia and the UK.

Using academic and grey literature (including policy documents and reports), key aspects of ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure in the context of Australia and the UK were mapped out as well as using the literature more generally to ascertain the extent to which these characteristics are typical of global trends. Again, using academic and grey literature, I proceeded to catalogue and synthesise understandings of the consequences of the current higher education organisational forms on access and pedagogy in the UK and Australia, drawing the threads and connections between forms and educational offerings to students. This

strategy was used to address the second subsidiary question and to obtain a much better understanding of the consequences of these regimes for educational experiences.

To address subsidiary question three, which forms the nucleus of the research, 'resources of hope' were drawn on from existing academic literature that speaks to a range of alternative forms of enterprises such as co-operatives, trusts and employee benefit organisations in order to get an in-depth understanding of how each model works along the axes of ownership, control, governance, financing and organisational structure. 'Spaces of hope' (new imaginaries) were identified through gatekeepers and by conducting a web search and in the process, three weeks were spent at four social economy HEIs undertaking document review; carrying out observations; visiting the different faculties and conducting interviews with management, about the ownership, governance, financing and structure of these institutions. The faculty, staff and students were engaged in different focus group meetings of 7-8 persons each, for a duration of one hour to one hour and a half, to discuss key issues they face in these types of social economy institutions.

These focus group meetings allowed for the collective perspective of respondents about their experiences working and learning in these social economy models which would otherwise not generate the desired result if they were interviewed separately. A total of 49 interviews were conducted with management within the higher education sector, affiliated bodies and policy-makers at local government level to discuss the policy context and their perceptions of current and possible alternative forms which would inform the proposed heterodox higher education institutional model.

This approach provided 'context-dependent (practical) knowledge' that is consistent with the qualitative methodology adopted, rather than 'predictive theories and universals' (Flyvbjerg 2006: 245). Whilst the aim of the research was not to develop generalities from the findings, in the case-studies, this method of data collection was intended to provide more in-depth understanding of the salient features of the ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure of these institutions and to shape the development of an appropriate set of resources to inform the development of heterodox higher education institutional forms.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The rest of the thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter 2 will put contemporary HE in context by tracing the histories in the debate on the different models of higher education in the UK and Australia that have led to a marketised and commercialised model.

Chapter 3 discusses the operations of social economy enterprises (cooperatives, trust, mutual, worker-owned) and unpacks their salient features of ownership/control, governance, financing and organisation to understand how they differ from the corporate organisational form that are increasingly being emulated by contemporary HEIs.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology used in conducting the research. It discusses the theoretical underpinnings, the approaches to data collection and analyses as well as the ethical dimensions of the field research.

Chapter 5 presents and discusses the findings of interviews conducted with high level officials in contemporary HE in the UK and Australia to obtain an understanding of governance arrangement, institutional management and the financing mechanism of these institutions and how they impact student experiences.

Chapter 6 presents the findings and a discussion of four alternative case-study institutions to understand in what ways have the structure of these models helped to enhance students' educational experiences.

Chapter 7 explores the potential of heterodox forms of higher education institutions in terms of their configuration (ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure), and discusses the significance for policy and for higher education reform.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis with a summary of the main findings. Implications for policy and practice are discussed, the contribution to knowledge, limitations, recommendations for future research, next step, as well as some reflections on the research process.

Chapter 2

Contextualising and Theorising the Different Models of Higher Education in the UK and Australia

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will put contemporary higher education in context by tracing the histories in the debate on the different types of HEIs that have evolved over time beginning with a pre-modern elite model, to a post-World War II model of collectivist funding through taxation and culminating with the neo-liberalised modern era model of individualised funding by students. The chapter examines these developments in the context of the UK and Australia, two countries, whose higher education system have become increasingly isomorphic in their developmental path (Etzkowitz, Webster, Gebhardt and Terra, 2000).

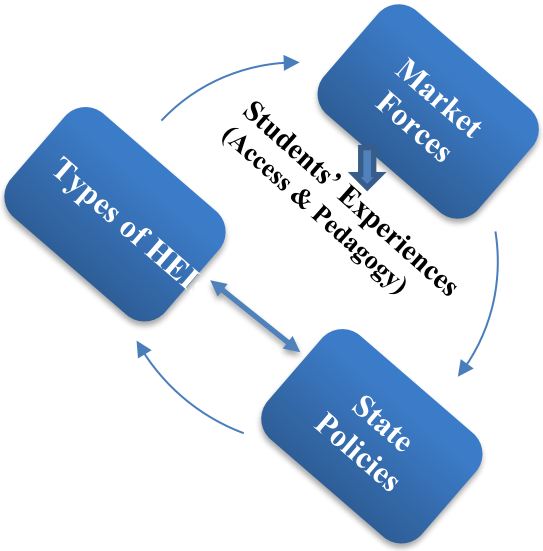
The aim of the chapter is to provide essential contextualisation to the rest of the thesis in its examination of heterodox forms of higher education institutions, by helping to illuminate the ways in which the discourses of trends in contemporary higher education in the UK and Australia have emerged, and how these have ultimately shaped the discourses of a marketised, entrepreneurial and commercialised paradigm that have reshaped the configuration (ownership, governance, financing and organisation) of HEIs, resulting in implications for students' educational experiences. It will later pave the way for the exploration of an alternative pathway for higher education in ways that facilitate the rethinking of pedagogies (Fullan, 2005; Hargraves, 2003; Sahlberg, 2004)

and increased access for under-privileged students (Burke, Crozier and Misiaszek, 2017; Burke, Crozier et. al., 2013).

In attempting to interpret the changes in the current trajectory, a conceptual model is presented (Figure 2.1) that captures the essence of the dynamic relationship within the triad of market forces, government policies, and types of HEIs. The chapter explores how successive government policies influenced by an assemblage of market forces have shaped the types of higher education institutions that have emerged from the thirteenth century to the twenty-first century, and driven students' educational experiences in terms of access and pedagogy.

Figure 2.1

Conceptual model: The interrelationship between the assemblage of market forces, government policies and HE institutional forms and the implications for students' experiences.



The assemblage of market forces and government policies are reflected in the transformations within the HE system in the UK and Australia. Universities have become increasingly competitive and the trend towards commercialisation speaks to a form of capitalism that has permeated the higher education system (Lockie, 2009; Hill and Kumar, 2012) as universities endeavour to sell their brand and to outperform each other in the global knowledge economy. This neoliberal trend (Connell, 2013) has implications for students and for the public good agenda that once characterised universities.

The chapter is divided into two further sections. Section 2.2 presents an historical overview of the types of HEIs in the UK and Australia and their progression from serving a collective public good to a private investment (Olssen and Peters, 2005; Tilak, 2008). It considers how these various institutional types have impacted students' educational experiences in terms of access and pedagogy at each transition point. Section 2.3 concludes the chapter with a short summary.

2.2 Types of Higher Education Institutions in the UK and Australia

Dominance of Elite Prototypes in the Academe

At different transition points HEIs in the UK and Australia were established as functional or territorial institutions (Anderson, 2006) with a purpose of service to their respective cities. Yet it was the nineteenth century that marked the defining moment that would shape the nature of contemporary higher education institutions in the UK and Australia.

The UK's 13th century models of higher education institutions namely Oxford and Cambridge (collectively known as Oxbridge) were constituted through elite influences and power dynamics of both monarchy and Church, but it was the Church that had the most profound influence on them (Anderson, 2006) and helped shape the pedagogy since they were inextricably linked to the Church, and many teachers were monks. Oxbridge was an exclusive all-male dominated, self-regulating community of scholars and academics (Universitas) whose corporate existence was recognised and sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority[1]. The educational infrastructure was imbricated in the Church and Oxbridge supplied church mendicant orders with theologically trained men (Hannam, 2003). At that time learning was essential for advancement in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, permitting scholars to gain prestige and security in their chosen careers (Hannam, 2003). The status of Oxbridge as prestigious *universitas* enabled them to take responsibility for their own disciplinary arrangements which followed canon law and they rarely had to deal with outside influences.

The small number of students focused on theological pursuits and education was a luxury only for this social elite group or those patronised by them (Trueman, 2010). During this medieval era, very few were educated at university level, even amongst the wealthy. The most educated people were those who worked in the Church (Trueman, 2010) and the development of merchant trading in medieval England demanded a more educated general population. The pedagogy was based on Latin, grammar and literature to allow the merchants to continue their trading since this was the preferred language most understood throughout Europe.

[1] Encyclopaedia Britannica: History of Education. The development of the universities

Wealthy merchants paid for the education of their sons to continue succession of the merchant business, while the Church provided a form of private patronage serving as the main sponsor of education (Portero, 2011). It was also advantageous at the time to be a member of a religious order because it meant that a student (friar) who could not afford to pay the tuition fees would have his education paid for by the mendicant order he belonged to (Hannam, 2003). Thus even during this medieval era in the UK, students who were less financially able but were fortunate enough to be patronised by the wealthy, were able to gain access to a university education and students were under no pressure to self-finance being affiliated to the collegiality that existed at the time. On the opposite side of the coin, women and students from the lower echelon of society were denied access to higher education.

Based on the simple conceptual model (Figure 2.1), the Church was shaping a particular type of university in which Oxbridge was looked upon to provide a system of education in strict conformity with the discipline of the Church of England (Salter and Lobel, 1954) and to educate men for the priesthood (Anderson, 2006). However a battle between monarchy and Church for supremacy of head of the Church of England ensued, when Henry VIII sought to subjugate the Church. The founding of Trinity College Cambridge by Henry VIII resulted in the attraction of a large number of lay students for the first time (Macfarlane, 2009). Through the exercise of legislative powers the crown sought to exert its influence on the university and the pedagogical practices by ordering Cambridge University to disband the faculty of Canon Law and to cease the teaching of scholastic philosophy (http://cambridge.net), thus marking the beginning of the end, of a pedagogy based exclusively on religious instruction.

Cambridge and Oxford remained all-male dominated elite institutions for hundreds of years (Lerner, 1994) before providing access to women in 1869 (http://cambridge.net) and 1878 respectively (http://www.ox.ac.uk). While there have been some changes in the governance structure since the inception of these two universities, the strong tradition of collegial governance remains a distinctive characteristic. The Scottish universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh as well as Ireland's University of Dublin, were founded in the fifteenth and sixteenth century and went on to join Oxbridge as the UK's seven prestigious institutions and the only ones in existence during the pre-industrial era (Baskerville, 2013).

By the early nineteenth century a reformation in the type of higher education institution had taken place in England and Oxbridge was becoming antiquated, far removed from the modern civic society that was emerging (Vernon, 2004). Canon law and Catholicism (religious studies) were being side-lined paving the way for the configuration and functions of a different type of university that would eventually alter the curriculum and pedagogy. The University College of London (UCL) was founded as an aggressively secular alternative to the religious ancient Oxbridge universities (Whyte, 2011). It was originally established under the name London University but received strong opposition from the Church of England and other critics, because its radical ideas on education and society, were interpreted as a seditious attack on Christianity. As a result, London University was prevented from receiving a Royal Charter to award degrees. Students would later be dubbed 'the Godless Students of Gower Street' (Taylor, 1968: 22:35-47) because of what was perceived at the time as a major departure from and an attack on the Church of England, whose monopoly on

access to higher education through Oxbridge had been challenged (UCL Council White Paper 2011–2021).

To address the situation faced by UCL, the University of London was established in 1836 with degree awarding powers, following the passage into law of the Emancipation Bill of 1829. The Bill also gave legal recognition to UCL. More fundamentally, it opened up access to all classes of society (Bellot, 1929), thereby deviating from the very essence of elitism associated with Oxford and Cambridge at the time. This transition point was a first major step towards the process of widening participation. The acceptance of women on equal terms with men 42 years later (UCL Council White Paper 2011-2021) was another significant achievement and variance from what was previously practiced in the thirteenth century. The curriculum included the teaching of modern foreign languages, English language, literature, science and engineering (not previously taught in English universities) and the first use of anaesthetics in surgery in Europe (Ashton, 2012).

Meanwhile, around the mid-nineteenth century Australia was developing an education model that mirrored the UK's Oxbridge type, with the establishment of its very own elite institutes. The Universities of Sydney and Melbourne were autonomous non-sectarian public institutes, archetypes of the University College of London. However, they assumed the prestige of the UK Oxbridge ideal, similarly catering for an all-male meritocracy (Marginson and Considine, 2000; Phillips, 2013) and were modelled after the traditions of Oxbridge. Initial attempts to establish a university in Sydney, patterned after the UK's university-church relationship was unsuccessful (Davis, 2013) thus Sydney University was influenced by an emerging urban middle class of lawyers,

bankers and manufacturers, for an education system that would prepare students for leadership and the professions (Attenbrow and Stanborough, 2002). Most of the then teaching staff of Sydney and Melbourne were recruited from the UK or they were Australians who had studied in the UK (Meek and Hayden, 2005), pointing to the neo-colonial influence of the UK on the Australian higher education system. Sydney and Melbourne reflected the Oxbridge model in their curriculum but students also followed a pedagogy of classics, sciences, mathematics, languages, literature, ancient history, medicine, law, engineering, music and arts (Davis 2013), disciplines that would eventually shape the type of graduates produced.

The influence of these two elite institutes on Australia's educational landscape spanned well over two decades before the arrival of the universities of Adelaide, Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia, in their mainland capital cities during the late nineteenth century to early-twentieth century, as territorial offshoots of the UK's Oxbridge Universities (Quiggin, 2011). The Australian National University, New South Wales and Monash were later established as post World War II universities. These Sandstones[2] and Redbricks[3], so coined (Marginson and Considine, 2000) because of their global prestige and architectural design, are members of Australia's Group of Eight (with the exception of Tasmania), and form the Commonwealth's leading research intensive universities (The Group of Eight, 2015).

Similar to the UK, Australia's Sandstones/Redbricks have traditionally followed an elitist model that has imposed limits on the numbers, gender and socio-economic

[2] Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Tasmania, Queensland, Western Australia
[3] Australian National, New South Wales, Monash

backgrounds of students who were able to gain access (Teichler, 1988). Although by nature these institutes were publicly incorporated and financed by the state, they maintained autonomy and charged tuition fees, except for the University of Western Australia (Clark, 1987). At the time Australia's elite universities were established, they only accepted students among the societal elite who were able to pay the tuition fees or those who benefitted from generous scholarships funded by government endowment and powerful businessmen (Clark, 1987; Geoffrey and Craig, 2008). Women and students from poorer socio-economic backgrounds were excluded (Clark, 1987). The majority of Australian students could not afford a university education.

In the simple conceptual model (Figure 2.1) the type of HEIs in Australia during this earlier transition period were influenced by social elites and less-privileged young people were adversely impacted by exclusion, based on the policies that were in place. It meant that the non-elite masses were denied the opportunity for social mobility through HE. Three decades after the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne were formed, they went on to admit female students on par with male students for the first time (www.sydney.edu.au; http://our-history.unimelb.edu.au/timeline) signalling a major achievement for women and a process that would eventually lead to increased participation of women in Australia's higher education system.

Reshaping Higher Education – The Industrial Era

During the period in which UCL was established, England was being transformed by the Industrial Revolution (Lambert, 2014). Major industrial cities were developing rapidly and pressure was mounting from the powerful business community for students

to be trained in science and technology, as it was feared that Britain might lose its leading position as an industrial nation. Oxbridge was still deeply ingrained in the teachings of the Church and had not changed to meet these new demands and neither had the other five ancient universities (St. Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dublin). The UK's HEIs were being reshaped by philanthropists who generously financed the establishment of civic universities (Manchester[4], Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield) also known as Redbrick universities[5] in emerging industrial cities to serve local civic communities with industrial skilled labour for industry and commerce (Anderson, 2006).

While civic universities were engaged in strengthening industrial cities with skilled workers trained in the field of science and technology, policymakers at the political level looked towards institutional strengthening of the civil service. The Northcote-Trevelyan Report of 1853 was commissioned and government policies focused on training personnel for careers as professional administrators in the civil service. The report recommended that recruitment into the civil service should be made entirely on the basis of merit by open, competitive examinations and that entrants should have a good 'generalist' education to be recruited to a unified civil service and not a specific department (Thompson, 2006:497; Vandenabeele and Horton, 2008:10). The recommendation by Northcote-Trevelyan could be understood within the context of the nature of the civil service which allows for movement of staff across ministries and departments at short notice during their tenure of service. On the basis of the report, the government turned to universities to assist in producing students for careers as professional administrators in the civil service.

[4] At the time was called Owens College which later became Victoria University of Manchester
[5] Redbrick universities were so named because of the type of brick they were constructed with

Thus unlike the medieval epoch in which universities were accessible to only male elites, the industrial era had reshaped universities and the curriculum. The business community, philanthropists and policymakers were change agents for the types of higher education institutions that followed the Oxbridge model and students received a different educational experience in terms of access and pedagogy since more students from both sexes were entering higher education. Although education was not free, most of these institutions were founded as charities or were financed as gifts from beneficiaries, providing students who were unable to finance their education with full scholarships.

The influence of powerful benefactors in the development of universities in industrial cities was also likely to refocus the curriculum away from the more traditional subjects offered by Oxbridge to the demands of industrialisation (Jones, 1988), providing industry, commerce and the civil service with a skilled labour-force through the teaching of scientific and vocational subjects including engineering. Access to higher education was widening and this was a significant change from the all-male dominated Oxbridge university as UCL had paved the way for other universities who subsequently allowed for the participation of female students. But despite broadening access, the main beneficiaries remained the middle class and less so for the under-privileged.

The 'Gift' Economy and Mass Higher Education

Meanwhile, Australia's elite educational landscape was also being transformed. World War II resulted in mounting public pressure for an increase in the number of universities and widened participation in order to address the demands of a post-War II baby boom in the number of Australians attending university (Phillips, 2013). Prior to World War

II there were only six Australian universities and at the time the elite universities were formed there were less than 50000 students in HE (Phillips, 2013; Higher Education: A policy statement, 1988:6). About one third of all full time students were on full government scholarship (Barrigos, 2013; Phillips, 2013). Like the UK, science and technology was a priority on the political agenda (Davis, 2013; Meek and Hayden, 2005), leading to the Murray Report of 1957. This transition period was a 'gift economy' in which government's subsequent policy initiative was to provide funding to the higher education sector in an effort to widen access and increase the number of scholarships offered to students (Barrigos, 2013). The policy initiative was viewed from the notion that higher education has always had an obligation to serve the public good (Kezar, Chambers and Burkhardt, 2005) in its core activities of teaching, research and community service thereby creating a more equitable, just and humane society (Singh, 2001).

At the time Murray's report was released the number of students in higher education was equivalent to 5 per cent of Australia's population (Phillips, 2013). This was due in part to the lack of funds made available by the state governments, thereby inhibiting expansion of Australian universities prior to the Second World War, and also the lack of demand for graduates by industry and government (Abbott and Doucouliagos, 2003). The establishment of the Australian Universities Grant Commission (AUC) in 1959 was a product of the report and it served as a 'buffer' between government and the higher education sector (Meek and Hayden, 2005). Based on the earlier conceptual model (Figure 2.1), government's education policies were significant in shaping the numbers and type of universities that were founded between the 1960s to mid-1970s. This was a major period of publicly financed expansion (Marginson and Considine, 2000:189).

A total of twelve universities were established in different regions, taking the total number of universities in Australia at the time to nineteen (NIAD-UE, 2010 & 2015). These regional universities would become popularly known as Gumtrees[6] (Phillips, 2013) because of the concrete and glass architecture amongst the Gumtrees in their cities' comfortable suburbs (Moodie, 2012). The nature of the pedagogy in the Gumtrees was interdisciplinary, similar to the model of the UK's 'plate glass' universities (Moodie, 2012), in their desire to break away from the tradition of the Sandstone universities (Moodie, 2012). Included in their curriculum were the sciences, arts, social sciences and humanities but their research role was limited since they did not offer medicine and engineering (Marginson and Considine, 2000:199).

Of significance is that the Gumtrees were able to attract a large group of female students by diversifying into vocational education as well as child care services (Phillips, 2013), providing more women access to higher education as well as students who were unable to gain entry into the more prestigious Sandstone universities. Participation also widened in colleges of advanced education that were cheaper to run because of the absence of research costs (Forsyth, 2015). The advent of Gumtrees served as an impetus for Sandstone universities to change their conservative nature by providing some access to students from less privileged backgrounds (Moodie, 2012).

Following World War II, the UK government embarked on its own education reform process to increase the number of universities and to make HE available to a wider section of the population. This was the era of the welfare state with free education

[6] University of Newcastle, James Cook University, Griffith University, Flinders University, Deakin University, Macquarie University, Murdoch University, University of Wollongong, La Trobe University, University of New England

among other social benefits and the aim was for HE to be a ladder for bright working-class and lower-middle-class young people to meet the manpower needs of the country (Barr, 2014) and to contribute towards the post-war economic recovery (Wright, 2015). The Universities Grant Committee (UGC) pledged funding support to any new university that demonstrated evidence of strong local support and innovation in its curriculum (Times Higher Education, August 10, 2001). The UGC was an autonomous body established in 1919 as a product of the Haldane report and it was designed to ensure the independence of general research and dissemination of government's 'gift money' to universities in the UK (Anderson, 2006; Boden and Nedeva, 2010; Shattock and Berdahl, 1984). It served as a buffer between government and universities until World War II (Shattock and Berdahl, 1984) while curtailing government's interference in how the money was spent.

This was a watershed period in which government served as a major actor in steering the economy and in driving the establishment of six 'plate glass'[7] universities (Sussex, Keele, East Anglia, York, Newcastle and Essex) between 1961 and 1963. Sussex was the first among these and it developed an innovative approach to its pedagogy and to learning that would break down traditional academic boundaries and facilitated interdisciplinary teaching and research referred to as 'redrawing the map of learning' (Times Higher Education, August 10, 2001). The UGC was replaced by the Universities Funding Council and further superseded by the existing Higher Education Funding Councils for England, Scotland and Wales under the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992.

[7] Universities established or institutions promoted to university status around the early 1960s

Of particular significance for students' experiences during that transition period was the opportunity of free education for all, with the government's announcement in 1962 of its decision to pay the fees of all students and to issue maintenance grants for students to study wherever they wished (Anderson, 2010). This policy decision was an outward demonstration by policymakers that HE was indeed a public good (Anderson, 2006) to be financed by the state and not a private benefit/investment to be paid for by students.

However, even with the expansion of universities there was still a huge unmet demand for HE particularly among the lower socio-economic classes (Blanden and Machin, 2004) as the system remained elite (Trow 1973 in Bathmaker, 2003). The recommendation of the Robbins commissioned report of 1963 was for an immediate expansion of the sector to ensure that 'all who were qualified by ability and attainment and who wished to enter should be able to do so' (Robbins, 1963:31:8). This meant that students would receive access to HE only on the basis of merit and not necessarily that HE was unconditionally accessible to all.

Perhaps of even greater significance is that the Robbins report aimed to increase the proportion of those students coming from the working and lower-middle-classes of society. It cautioned against the immediate introduction of loans to students over grants which could discourage participation and diminish the supply of talent, thereby leading to a social loss and the possibility of out-balancing any gain in social justice (Robbins, 1963:645). The Robbins report led to the establishment of around 40 state-funded polytechnics and technical colleges that symbolised a social investment in building technological capacity (Anderson, 2006). The UK also witnessed the proliferation of

seventeen more 'plate glass' universities[8] between 1964 and 1969 that pushed the total number of universities from twenty-eight-to fifty-one.

Polytechnics and technical colleges added diversity to the higher education system from the purely academic education that was offered by universities, by placing emphasis on technical/vocational education. It gave students' choices to pursue different fields of study and to gain hands-on experience in areas of science, engineering and technology thus facilitating their career path. The demographic profile of students was also changing rapidly during that transition period (Anderson, 2006), with many more adult and part-time students entering HE thus polytechnics appeared to better cater to the needs of that sector of the population.

The division between universities and polytechnics became known as the 'binary divide'. In 1992 the binary divided was made obsolete (Boxall, 2012) under the Further and Higher Education Act. Polytechnics and Colleges were upgraded to university status with full degree awarding powers. This led to a number of 'new universities' with the merger of existing universities or the formation of new ones taking the total number of universities in the UK from fifty-one to ninety-two between 1990 and 1996.

The mass movement of students' post 1992 resulted in the formation of forty-six additional 'new universities' in the UK between 2001 and 2014 to satisfy the growing global demand for university places. I argue that the policy decision to disband polytechnics and colleges could be considered a great loss to the HE system as it has

[8] Lancaster, London Business School, Strathclyde, Warwick, Kent, Aston, Loughborough, Brunel, Surrey, Bath, Bradford, City, Heriot-Watt, Salford, Stirling, Dundee and Open University

created a gap in the distinctiveness of higher education (Brennan and Shah, 2011). Prior to Robbins there were about 400,000 full time higher education students at UK institutions (Wyness, 2010:4). Almost a decade later the number of students attending higher education in the UK had almost doubled (Bathmaker, 2003). The Robbins report brought some rapid expansion to the higher education system allowing access to more students yet participation in higher education remained the lowest in any advanced industrial country (Wyness, 2010). Even more problematic was that under-represented students were not penetrating the system as anticipated by the report and university admissions continued to be dominated by wealthier students (Blanden and Machin, 2004).

A significant development in UK higher education during the 20th century was the founding of the Open University as an all-inclusive non-discriminatory institution. The Open University provided a futuristic type of learning experience to working professionals through distance learning (Tresman, 2002) in order to facilitate those who did not have the time to sit in a classroom full-time. The university was the first of its kind in the UK to provide a flexible teaching and learning experience with the aim of developing white collar professionals and technical expertise for the labour market. Its popularity grew and by 2005 it had registered a total of 180,000 students with the majority based in the UK.

Australia's higher education system also continued with the rapid expansion of technology-focused or Unitechs[9] institutions (Forsyth, 2015) in industrial cities during

[9] Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), University of Technology Sydney, Queensland University of Technology, Curtin University of Technology now Curtin University, University of South Australia (A merger of the Institute of Technology and College of Advanced Education)

the twentieth century, similar to the UK's polytechnics. The pedagogy and curriculum of these institutions differed from that of the more traditional universities opening up access to a more diverse group of students (Marginson and Considine, 2000). Government's policy initiative was a direct strategy intended to provide industry with a more skilled labour force (Andrews, Aungles, Baker and Sarris, 1998) in response to demands from a growing manufacturing and services industry (Barrigos, 2013), thus capturing the essence of the dynamic relationship within the simple triad (Figure 2.1) of the assemblage of market forces, government policies and types of HEIs models that are likely to impact students' experiences. The training of scientists, technicians and engineers (Davis, 2013) to occupy positions of national priority featured high on the political agenda, but even with the expansion in Australian universities participation in higher education among the less privileged was still very low as the social elites continued to disproportionately enjoy the benefits (Dawkins, 1988; Phillips, 2013) pointing to the isomorphism in the education system of both countries.

An important policy initiative by the government during the late twentieth century, was the abolition of tuition fees and the introduction of a system of free higher education (Clark, 1987; Knott, 2014) which positioned HE as a public good. The Commonwealth assumed full control over university funding from the States government and students were provided with a form of income support (Knott, 2014; Meek and Hayden, 2005). The assumption was that students should benefit from a university education on the basis of merit rather than on parents' wealth (Knott, 2014). At that time there were 200,000 students, mostly domestic, on Commonwealth scholarships/other scholarships or self-financed (Group of Eight, Australia, 2014). If many more working class students did not take advantage of the opportunities of free higher education (Knott, 2014), it

might have been because successive governments failed to enact a compulsory high school (secondary) education for all Australians. The Commonwealth education policy was significant within a 'gift economy'. Based on the simple conceptual model (Figure 2.1.1) it stood to enhance students experiences and to bring about more equity in higher education consistent with the principles of social justice, by making tertiary education more accessible to the working class (Phillips, 2013) through grants to State governments (Chapman and Nicholls, 2013).

The Thatcher and Dawkins Revolution and the Rise of the Neoliberal Academe

The pseudo-market model of higher education institutions in the UK and Australia as is becoming common in many parts of the world (Jemielniak and Greenwood, 2013; Newfield, 2008; Shore and Wright, 1999) has called into question the core assumptions of the utility of higher education (Collini, 2012) given that in this 21st Century, more young graduates than ever before are either heavily debt burdened, unemployed or are underemployed (Rayner, 2016). More than one in three young persons are said to be in low skilled jobs in the UK (Financial Times dated April 26, 2016) and in 2014, over 16 per cent of 24 year olds were underemployed in Australia (Rayner, 2016). This section examines the role of government policies and external actors in shaping the discourse on the market model of contemporary HEIs in the UK and Australia and discuss how this has driven students' educational experiences. Before proceeding I provide two definitions of the concept of marketisation.

Marketisation as defined by Brown (2011), in Scullion, Molesworth and Brown (2011), is 'a means of social coordination whereby supply and demand for a good or service

are balanced through the price mechanism. Consumers choose between the alternatives on offer on the basis of perceived suitability for them in terms of price, quality and availability' (p. 26). The Oxford Dictionary also defines marketisation as the process of transforming a national economy away from a planned economy towards a market-based economy. Both definitions are relevant in the context of this research.

The emerging trends in UK and Australia HE have been the subject of discourse in the scholarly literature. Synonymous with the for-profit corporate sector, terms such as marketisation (Massy, 2004; Molesworth, Scullion and Nixon, 2010), commercialisation (McGettigan, 2013; Robertson, 2014), neoliberalism (Jemielniak and Greenwood, 2013; Neidoo and Williams, 2015) and entrepreneurialism (Shattock, 2009) have been used to describe the direction of change though not exclusive to these two countries. In more recent times the language of the knowledge economy has become ubiquitous in knowledge policies (Weiler, 2011) as higher education institutions are being regarded as fundamental to the knowledge economy and vital in driving economic growth (BIS, 2011; Radice, 2013). Adding to the on-going discourse is whether HE is a public good or a private investment.

Some analysts argue that the defining moment for the marketisation of British universities began in earnest during the Thatcher administration (1979-1990), with the government's privatisation policies aimed at liberalisation of the sector (Parker, 2009; Gillard, 2011), the erosion of academic autonomy, a reduction in the funding support to higher education institutions (Dobbins and Knill, 2014) and the introduction of new public management (NPM) practices and ideologies. Others contend that the erosion of

university autonomy preceded Thatcherism (Radice, 2013). Yet, the fundamental question is how did the higher education sector get to this neoliberal juncture?

The changes in UK higher education system during the 1980s were driven in response to a wider public sector reform throughout the Commonwealth. According to Smith (2008), this process followed mounting pressure on Commonwealth governments by international donor agencies such as the World Bank, OECD and the EU to reform their structures and processes for improved performance, transparency and accountability in the governance of the state as well as greater private sector participation and less government service delivery (p. 3). As public institutions funded by the state, higher education was not immune to the government's privatisation policies and reduction in social expenditure across the public sector.

Meanwhile the Hawke Labour government was pursuing a similar entrepreneurial path (Etzkowitz, et. al., 2000) for Australia's HE sector. During the period 1987-1990, then Labour Education Minister, Dawkins embarked on a number of HE reforms that would have far-reaching implications for both students and academic staff. The 'Dawkins Revolution' as they would become popularly known, resulted in the re-introduction of tuition fees in 1989 by means of an income contingent loan system (Gornitzka, et.al 2005; Knott, 2014; Phillips, 2013) to be managed by the Higher Education Commonwealth Scheme (HECS) and marked the termination of free education for domestic students (Barrigos, 2013).

A similar policy (as explained in the earlier pages of this chapter) was adopted by the UK a few years later, pointing to the isomorphism that exist between these two

countries. This was done on the pretext that HE costs the Australian taxpayer around $2800m each year (Higher education: A policy statement, 1988:10). But like the UK under Margaret Thatcher and the U.S. under Ronald Reagan, Dawkins was paving the way for a neoliberal takeover of universities in which the user pays (Barrigos, 2013). Government proceeded to exercise tighter control over the public purse with the expectation that students would meet the shortfall in university incomes, assuming the role of customers, thus repositioning the traditional student-teacher relationship within the institution.

Critics may argue that students do not have to pay upfront fees, but the counter argument is that the introduction of a loan system would inevitably result in a debt to students (Chapman and Higgins, 2013), the large majority of who are just beginning their lives. Students from marginalised backgrounds would be the ones most likely to feel the economic pressure, as universities devised strategies to supplement their income. With a HELP loan portfolio of approximately $42.3 billion in 2015/16, it has been predicted that the Australian government stands to lose, as an estimated 21 per cent of that aggregate amount will not be repaid (Bowen, 2016: p. vi; Owens, 2016). This is because many graduates will move overseas permanently, or will not reach the anticipated income threshold of $45,000 (Bowen, 2016) despite these students having a degree certification backed by an education debt. It has been estimated that the loan portfolio will rise to $185.2 billion in 2026 while students HECS debts is expected to reach $11 billion in 2026 up from $1.7 billion in 2015/16 (Bowen, 2016, p. 6; Owens, 2016).

Dawkin's abolition of the binary divide similar to the UK initiative which preceded it, and its replacement with a 'unified national system' of full-fledged universities (Gornitzka, Kogan and Amaral, Eds., 2005; Marginson and Considine, 2000), led to the establishment of nineteen 'new universities' (Marginson and Considine, 2000:190) during the 20th and 21st centuries. This process resulted in a sharp increase in the number of Australian universities (Bridge, 1989) to 43, thus paving the way for competition among institutions on the basis of merit and achievement, rather than historical precedent and arbitrary classification (Higher Education: A policy statement, 1988:10).

The Hawke government's reforms continued under successive governments, resulting in a mutation of universities from providing a (free) public good to the pursuit of an entrepreneurial path (Marginson and Considine, 2000) with a 'price tag' for students that makes higher education almost prohibitive. Further government funding cuts of $2.3 billion in 2013 continued to affect the higher education sector (Barrigos, 2013) leading to the casualisation and precarisation of the academic workforce (Barrigos, 2013) as a cost-cutting measure. Universities also seized the opportunities created by globalisation to internationalise their services through commercial activities in keeping with the prescriptions of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), mass production of knowledge and competition for international students. The demand on academics to go after the research dollar appears to have been given priority over teaching, because system rewards are all about the amount of research money that academics are able to raise (Leathwood and Read, 2012) for their university, placing students at a great disadvantage.

In the case of the UK, the biggest impact of the knowledge policy intervention and the defining moment for the marketisation of English[10] universities was felt during the Thatcher administration (1979-1990), with the government's privatisation policies and reduction in social expenditure across the public sector. The abolition of the Universities Grant Committee in 1989 (which had acted as a buffer between government and universities) and its replacement with funding councils under the Education Reform Act of 1988 placed university autonomy under threat. The Haldane Principle which restricted government interference was effectively discarded and the way was paved for political priorities to be enforced more directly (Anderson, 2006). Government took over control of the funding stream, albeit steering at a distance, disseminating funds to universities on the basis of what in the opinion of policymakers was a priority area. The thinking behind it was that universities should serve the knowledge economy.

The higher education sector suffered its first major financial blow with the reduction in funding of universities by approximately 15% (Dobbins and Knill, 2014) during the 1980s and dismantling of the welfare state while looking towards liberalisation, privatisation and a more market-oriented higher education system (Parker, 2009; Gillard, 2011). The abolition of what had become a 'gift economy' including the maintenance grant to students was unprecedented (Greenaway and Haynes, 2003). The loss of security of tenure by academic staff left them vulnerable to summary dismissal (Wilby, 2013), while the imposition of tuition fees on overseas students under the Education Fees and Awards Act of 1983 was a further policy move, designed to supplement university incomes.

[10] The rest of the UK continue to fund higher education as a collective public good

Thatcher's economic policies continued under successive governments. The Universities Funding Council was replaced with the Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) under the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992. This gave a sense of déjà vu – similar to what happened to the UGC - and introduced competition among institutions for funds and for students (Gillard, 2011). The end of the binary divide and granting of full university status to the polytechnics served to reinforce that competition in the knowledge economy was a reality for the survival of universities in a world of globalisation (Anderson, 2010). Likewise the introduction of home student fees to £3,000 following the Dearing Report of 1997 (Greenaway and Haynes, 2003) and its escalation by 300 per cent in 2012, following further cuts in higher education funding, altered the method of state funding by shifting the burden of financing universities from the government, entirely to students in the form of loans backed by government but managed by an autonomous private Students Loans Company. It also helped reinforce the concept of human capital theory (Fitzsimons, 2015). Loans attracted a repayment rate of 9% of a graduate's income above £21,000 per annum (BIS: Students at the Heart of the System, 2011).

The recommendation of the Dearing Report of 1997 that home students start paying for their university education (Crace and Shephard, 2007), was the beginning of student consumerism in higher education, altering the concept of education as a 'public good' to education as a 'private benefit' (Shaw, 2010). By recommending that students should 'learn to earn' (Wright, 2015) the Dearing Report was in effect forcing universities to relinquish their mission as providers of a social good while adopting an entrepreneurial spirit for self-sustenance (Jemielniak and Greenwood, 2013).

Like Australia, the policy-driven marketisation of UK higher education to satisfy the government's economic agenda (Burke, 2013) has attempted to recast the relationship between academics and students according to critics (Furedi, 2010) along the model of a service provider and customer in a contractual relationship (Melear, 2003). It has also pushed HEIs into international markets. Universities such as Nottingham, Newcastle, Southampton and Monash have opened branch campuses overseas (Ball, 2012) to maintain a competitive advantage and to expand recruitment abroad.

It could be argued that these branch campuses provide accessibility and affordability for students of those colonised countries who are unable to travel abroad for an education. However the main reason for taking their business in unfamiliar territory could be viewed as economic in an attempt to market their brand and raise income (Barrigos, 2013). The marketisation of higher education has made the sector a multi-billion pound business paid for by students', while in the UK alone, vice-chancellors have become 'fat cats', awarding themselves salaries and allowances as high as £468,000 per annum (The Guardian dated 11 December 2017) some 13 times the average academic staff salary.

If there was resistance from academics to embrace what might be perceived as the neoliberal changes (Di Leo, 2013) in contemporary HE, it is because what the university has become appeared different from the collegiality among scholars and students that they had grown accustomed to for decades. Meanwhile students' expectations of value for money cannot be disputed in view of the reality that the purpose of any business is customer satisfaction, and students who have been recast as customers by policymakers are having to purchase their education for a very high price.

In the simple conceptual model (Figure 2.1) the UK government's economic and knowledge policies may have created a move towards a neoliberal (Ball, 2012) market model in HE driven by managerial logic (new managerialism). This trend has been introduced in the UK in successive stages and is clearly articulated in the 2011 White Paper. Education has become a global trading commodity that is being produced, bought and sold as a consumption good by students as customers, multi-national corporations, academic institutions and other providers (Altbach, 2015:2) as was also predicted by Lyotard (1979) in his book, 'The Postmodern Condition'. These trends are likely to have future implications for students' educational experiences in terms of access and cost as outlined in this chapter. In the meantime, many students will not repay their loan within the designated period. This is not because students intentionally wish to do so but because many of them are unlikely to land the type of job that will improve their socio-economic position. Studies have indicated that approximately 85% of UK graduates will not repay their loans (Clugston, 2011).

According to Clugston, for a home-student to repay a loan debt of £43,515 comfortably at the end of 30 years, the graduate would have to earn a starting salary of £51,460 per annum. Otherwise the debt is likely to accumulate to £78,510 in 27 years if that same graduate's starting salary is at the average national wage of £26,600 (Prestridge, 2013). What Clugston's data implies under the current loan arrangement is that a student graduating from university at age 20 and with only a first degree education would carry a student debt into the age of 50, the most part of his/her working life when it will cease to be payable. An independent study by the Intergenerational Foundation in 2013 also revealed that England was squeezing its students harder than any other publicly-funded higher education system in the world by charging students twice as much interest

(6.6%) on student loans compared to the OECD average of 3.3% (White, 2013). The findings of the two studies are alarming as they seem to suggest that the same graduates who are depended upon to help drive the economy are being ruined financially (Baum, 2017) by the current education system.

2.3 Summary

In this chapter, I demonstrated the progression of universities in the UK and Australia from a strict pedagogy of a small and selective elite system during the medieval and colonial era to a mass system with diversity of student intake during the modern era. I also discussed the shift from a 'gift economy' to a market-oriented system in which students, now often conceived as customers, are expected to pay for their education and to sustain universities. The marketised and neoliberal transformation of the university system which took effect in the UK and Australia between the 1970s and 1980s continues to the present and has converted higher education into an export industry based on international student demand.

The types of universities that emerged at various transition points were influenced by the socio-political and business dynamics of the time such as the church, the state, philanthropists and/or the business community in which these universities were rooted. These institutions have also influenced the type of students that have been produced such as ministers of religion, scientists, engineers, civil servants and more recently, skilled workers for the knowledge economy and who have gone on to impact the wider society by means of their various positions, thereby reflecting the dynamic relationship within the triad as illustrated in Figure 2.1. Expansion of the higher education sector

may be perceived as a tool for social transformation and economic development (Forsyth, 2015) but government neoliberal policies have created particular types of orthodox institutions that are being turned into business enterprises (Davis, 2013; Marginson and Considine, 2000) as they navigate spaces of neoliberalism and appear to exist to serve an economic interest (Guthrie and Neumann, 2007).

These policy directives have also resulted in different experiences for students in the UK and Australia, as they are being shaped into customers who now view universities as transactional businesses and who must sustain university operations, particularly international students. At the same time tomorrow's future leaders are becoming heavily debt burdened with no guarantee of immediate employment upon graduation even after following a curriculum and a strict pedagogy that supposedly have been influenced by market forces for employability. The students hardest hit are those from poorer working class backgrounds who are likely to be held in a poverty-trap for many years to come (Inman, 2015; Minty, 2015). The quality of the pedagogy may also be compromised because of the ratio of students to academics in the classroom or because academics are forced to focus more heavily on the research agenda as a requirement of the Research Excellence Framework in the case of the UK and the Excellence in Research as it relates to Australia (Cashmore, Cane and Cane, 2013).

The economic policies and power influences of the Thatcher and Hawke administrations as well as those of their successors are consistent with the educational backgrounds of these revolutionary leaders, having been schooled in some of the elitists' institutions making it virtually impossible for such decision makers to identify with the plight of students from low socio/economic backgrounds and thus continuing

to reinforce the triad relationship illustrated in Figure 2.1. Despite governments' pronouncements of improving the educational experiences of less-privileged students, their policies appear to be having quite the opposite effect.

This thesis does not attempt to make a case to revert to the past. However understanding the past and examining the present will provide the lens to advance into the future of heterodox forms of higher education institutions. Despite widening access and an expanded higher education system that has been driven by the mass movement of students across the globe, HE in the UK and Australia have become increasingly competitive and remains highly stratified while less privileged students continue to be disadvantaged.

In the next chapter I discuss the features of social economy enterprises examining their patterns of ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure. An understanding of how these models are constituted will contribute to the current discourses and a deeper analysis of the market trends in contemporary HE through the lens of new managerialism (Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007) which is increasingly being adopted. The issues identified will also help to inform the proposed heterodox higher education institution model.

Chapter 3

Social Economy Enterprises: Alternatives to Neoliberalism: Exemplars for Public HEI Reform?

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2 I presented a brief historical background of higher education institutions in the UK and Australia to help illuminate some of the policy discourses that have helped shaped the current framework of HEIs (ownership, governance, financing and management), one that is based on what appears to be a market model (Cato and Heatley, 2012), thereby distinguishing the present, from the past social administration. In doing so, I used a simple conceptual model to demonstrate the relationship within the triad of an assemblage of market forces, government policies, and types of HEIs. This model helped to clarify how this relationship has been influential at various transition points in shaping students' access and experiences.

In seeking solutions to the market model and 'new management' practices that are increasingly being adopted by HEIs in the UK and Australia (as part of a neoliberal political philosophy), this chapter discusses the main elements and machinery of social economy enterprises, most notably, ownership/control, governance, financing and management. This will provide a deeper analysis of the discourses on social economy enterprises as alternatives to the market model and lay the groundwork for the proposed heterodox forms of higher education institutions, thereby addressing the third subsidiary research question which is:

- What alternative models of ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure might be constituted into new higher education institutional forms and how might these enhance students' experiences?

The rest of the chapter is organised as follows: Section 3.2 provides a brief overview of the market model economy and defines social economy enterprises. Section 3.3 examines the salient features of social economy enterprises as alternatives to the market model that has been adopted by contemporary public higher education institutions. More specifically it examines, cooperative enterprises, mutual and member-owned trust organisations for the purpose of this thesis. Finally, section 3.4 concludes the chapter with a short summary.

3.2 Brief Background to the Market Model Economy and Introduction to Social Economy Enterprises

The global financial crisis of 2008 saw the ignominious collapse of many large corporations (Enron, Lehman Bros., Merrill Lynch, Freddie Mac) and demonstrated the inefficiencies and failures of an unregulated capitalist economy, costing thousands of jobs (Harrison, 2013; Mathiason and Stewart, 2008; Rheannon, 2012). According to Mathiason and Stewart:

> "…*Western leaders, who for years boasted about the self-evident benefits of light-touch regulation, also had to sink trillions of dollars of tax-payers money as bailout to prevent the world banking system from collapsing*

resulting in huge catastrophic losses for ordinary investors of tens of billions of dollars…" (Mathiason and Stewart, 2008)

Despite this great global economic disaster, alternative models of social economy enterprises such as mutual benefit societies, trust societies, credit unions and other forms of cooperative enterprises remained resilient and continued to thrive without the need for government bailouts (Birchall and Ketilson, 2009). Such are the market imperfections that have been nurtured under capitalist free enterprise systems while state control has failed in equalising power and wealth and in decreasing worker alienation and exploitation (Hansmann, 2000). Notwithstanding the above, the UK and Australia government have followed the US in advancing neoliberalism as a policy prescription (BIS, 2011) for what has been described as an ailing, inefficient and ineffective higher education system (Furedi, 2010) and created the institutional framework for neoliberalism to thrive (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism is a political philosophy that promotes the concepts of liberalisation, competition, deregulation, free markets (Harvey, 2005), financial gain, reduced government expenditure on essential public services (such as education), consumerism, individual responsibility and globalisation. Closely linked to neoliberalism is 'managerialism', together which drive higher education policies and practices (Burbules and Torres, 2013; Lorenz, 2012 and Peters, 2013).

Capitalism in all its forms brings to the fore one of the important scripture verses which cautions that "the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10 KJV) hence private owners of the means of production will seek to exploit the labour of the large majority of the working class as theorised by Marx [1976] for the purpose of capital

accumulation (Watson, 2002). In other words, those who own and control corporations are likely to shape their performance and, in a capitalist economy, the maximization of shareholders' return on investments is incentivised (Hansmann, 2000). This does not in any way suggest that public HEIs are capitalist organisations in the true sense, because they do not have shareholders or private ownership of the means of production. However, in a marketised and entrepreneurial system such as the UK and Australia (Wright and Greenwood, 2017) the growing trend is accelerated competition among providers, albeit promoted by government policies (BIS, 2011:4.7, 4.10; Australia H.E. Policy Statement 1988). It is the expectation that in a market economy competition will lead to lower costs of goods and services, but what has taken place in contemporary higher education is quite the opposite, in which the costs of the product (education) has increased by 300%, particularly in the UK. Additionally, many top executives who control these institutes may appear to be self-serving (Cheffins, 2008), a practice which could potentially lead to opportunistic behaviour on the part of de facto owners (Hansmann, 2000). An example is the current discourses on the salary packages of Vice Chancellors (Wright and Greenwood, 2017) which seem to suggest that these senior managers are accountable only to themselves (Solomon, 2007).

The converse is true, however, that when ordinary people work collaboratively for the betterment of each other and the good of their communities, they can accomplish extraordinary things (Kouzes and Posner, 2017). This is what social economy enterprises epitomise. These enterprises are said to be firmly rooted in a solidarity based economy that help maintain the social fabric of the economy by advocating for social justice and equality (Allard and Davidson, 2008; Laville and Nyssens, 2001). It is important to mention from the outset that social economy enterprises are businesses

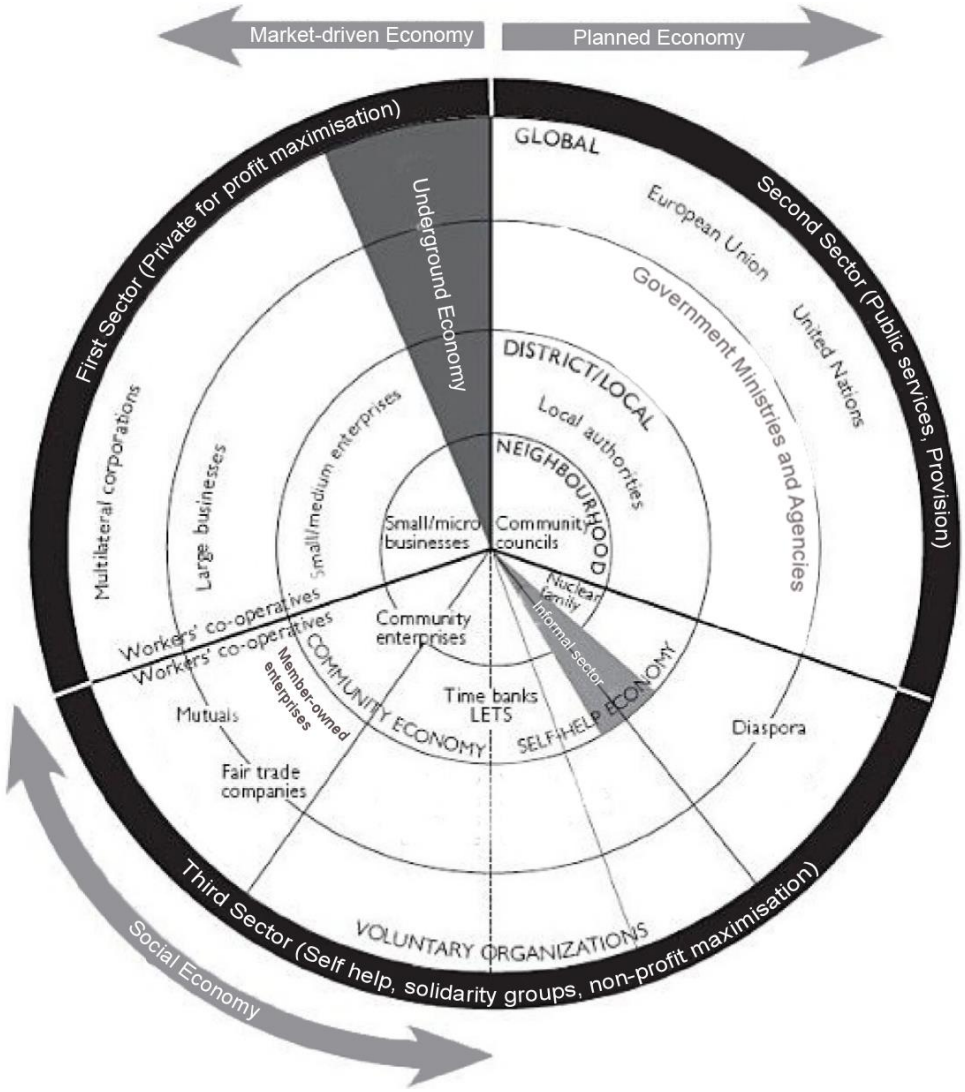
like any other investor-owned (Hansmann, 1999). The difference is in their primary objective, in which the needs of capital are subservient to the interests of people involved (Mayo, 2013 in Harrison, 2013:4), their organisational structure, decision-making processes, how capital is raised and how they conduct business. In other words, social economy enterprises hope to make a surplus on their investment in order to continue their business of service to their members and the community in which they operate.

Definition of Social Economy Enterprises

The term social economy was coined in France around the 1970s. It is a collective identity given to social entities such as cooperative enterprises, trust societies, mutual benefit societies, non-profit associations, and worker-owned organisations with a legal organisational form because of their common social traits (Defourny and Develtere, 2009) that differentiates them from the hegemonic capitalist business forms. In other words, they refer to any 'bona fide' private business initiative that differentiates them from the public sector or the private sector (Allard and Davidson, 2008). These social economy enterprises usually belong to the third sector (see Figure 3.1 adapted from Pearce 2003 in Amin 2013) where capital and the means of production are socially and collectively owned by the members (Neamtan, 2002:3). Pearce (2003) model seeks to illustrate an understanding of the role and importance of the social economy as a third sector and more fundamentally, how the three sectors of the economy are able to co-exist even while their aims and objectives may tend to differ. As illustrated in Figure 3.1, the first sector of the economy (private) is market driven with a focus on profit-maximisation. The second sector (public) is concerned with the planned provision of

public services for its citizens while the aim of the third sector is primarily working collaboratively to enhance the social good as well as the social, cultural and economic benefit of members and the wider community.

Figure: 3.1: Three Main Sectors of the Economy



Adapted from Pearce 2003 in Amin 2013

According to Defourny and Develtere, (2009), 'three major types of organisations have accounted for the three main legal and institutional components of the social economy in industrial countries over the past century. These are cooperative enterprises, mutual

aid societies and organisations whose legal status varies tremendously from one country to another but which all fall under the generic title *association*' (p. 10). Meanwhile, there has been no clear universally accepted definition for the social economy or third sector and the term remains nebulous. This then paves the way for commercially-oriented social enterprises (including some charities and voluntary organisations) that may disguise as having a public or community-service mission/orientation, to be included in that sub-sector of the economy as argued by Pearce (2013). Defourny and Develtere (2009) have made an attempt to define the social economy as 'including all economic activities conducted by enterprises, primarily cooperatives, associations and mutual benefit societies, whose ethics convey the following principles: placing service to its members or to the community ahead of profit; autonomous management; a democratic decision-making process; and the primacy of people and work over capital in the distribution of revenues' (pp. 15-16).

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) also defines social economy enterprises as 'any private activity conducted in the public interest, organised with an entrepreneurial strategy, but whose main purpose is not the maximisation of profit, but the attainment of certain economic and social goals, and which has a capacity of bringing innovative solutions to the problems of social exclusion and unemployment' (OECD, 1999, p. 10, in Haugh and Kitson, 2007).

The common thread in the two definitions suggests a social cohesion, aimed at addressing the social and economic needs of individuals. It takes us back to the primary objective of these social economy enterprise forms mentioned earlier, which is not the pursuit of economic gain for shareholders or investors, but rather a mission of service

to members and to the community (Laville and Nyssens, 2001) in the form of employment creation and lower costs of goods and services (Chaves and Monzón, 2012), through a democratically shared endeavour. The definition of social economy as provided by Defourny and Develtere (2009) goes into a bit more detail than that which has been advanced by the OECD and which seem to suggest that 'any non-profit activity conducted in the public interest' can be classified as belonging to the social economy. However, I argue that if the social economy truly represents a third sector that serves as an alternative to the public (planned economy) and private (market-driven economy) sectors then both definitions lack absolute clarity about the main features of these social enterprises that differentiate them in terms of their forms of ownership/control, governance and financing of their operations which I address in section 3.3 with reference to three specific social economy enterprises.

Social economy enterprises are claimed to be driven by a human quality that brings people together (Hudson, 2009) and which allows the businesses to run in a diametrically opposite direction from the neoliberal business model whose primary objective is the pursuit of economic returns for shareholders (Harrison, 2013) at the expense of their customers. They are inherently different from the neoliberal business models in their forms of ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure and while they may draw on market mechanisms, it is with the aim of advancing the social objectives of the communal members (Allard and Davidson, 2008). According to Arthur, Cato, Keenoy and Smith (2003), 'for an enterprise to be identified as forming part of the social economy it must be owned by its own employees/members who must also be able to exercise control by having a genuine power to influence management decisions' (pp. 16-17). The writers also argue that 'for an enterprise to be considered

part of the social economy a significant degree of its value (financing) must be owned directly by its employees or by other members of the local community' (p. 17). The argument put forward by Arthur et al (2003) is consistent with the position being advanced in this thesis. These elements of ownership, control and financing (economic participation) are clearly lost in the two definitions cited earlier and are essential components of the cooperative principles which I will address under the sections dealing specifically with cooperatives.

For the purpose of this thesis, the structural differences will be discussed in the context of cooperatives, mutual benefit societies and employee-owned trust organisations. These three enterprises have a very long social history having been born out of a struggle against the logic of capital accumulation (Satgar, 2007). They are separate entities but are sometimes mistakenly used interchangeably in some jurisdictions, when referring to cooperative enterprises.

3.3 Salient Features of Social Economy Enterprises (Cooperative Enterprises, Mutual Benefit Societies and Member-owned Trust Societies)

Cooperative enterprises, mutual benefit societies and member-owned trust organisations, are owned, controlled and operated by their members in a spirit of solidarity and members also patronise the business (Hansmann, 2000). This structure illustrates an approach that operates quite differently from that of contemporary HEIs with a system of new managerialism that has the tendency to focus more on financial value (Cato and Heatley, 2012) than the social benefit of an education to the wider society.

The difference between **c**ooperative enterprises, mutual benefit societies and trust societies is that with cooperatives the members who may also be employees have 'de jure' ownership title and invest their own share-capital in the business (Ridley-Duff, 2015), giving members a direct financial stake (as I explain further under each separate entity in section 3.3). Mutual benefit societies are similar to cooperatives in that they are owned, and financed by the members. The difference about mutual societies is in the nature of their business that focuses on health, welfare and insurance. In the case of trust societies, they are financed by a trustor who invests the initial capital to benefit other persons (beneficiaries). A further characteristic of cooperatives and mutual is that they are democratically and exclusively governed, controlled and operated by their members who take decisions at annual general meetings, unlike trust societies that are governed and controlled by a board of trustees (BOT) on behalf of the beneficiaries. Although in the case of member-owned trust societies, which is the focus of this thesis, the 'beneficial owners/members' may be able to exercise control and be represented on the BOT as was evident in one of the case-study institutions thereby enabling the beneficial owners to be actively involved in all aspects of the operations.

Modern **cooperatives** were started in England in 1844 by the Rochdale pioneers. The 28 pioneers were frustrated with the inequalities within society at the time and were eager to improve their socio-economic condition and that of their community by seeking an alternative model of economic development (Satgar, 2007) based on self-help and democratic principles (Williams, 2016). They formed a consumer cooperative to alleviate poverty by providing more affordable goods for their members and to prevent the exploitation that was taking place by the capitalist ideology of the industrial revolution, through the sale of adulterated goods at high prices (Harrison, 2013; Satgar,

2007). The cooperative movement quickly mushroomed and is now established worldwide. They are notably successful businesses in the advanced centres and peripheries, operating in industries such as agriculture, education, banking (credit unions), retail, fisheries, health, housing, industrial, funeral care, insurances, among others. The strength of cooperative enterprises is in the membership, with more than one billion members globally in 3 million cooperatives (ICA, 2017), providing more than 250 million jobs worldwide. This represents 12% of the total employed population within the G20 countries (Grace, 2014) and 10% of the employed population worldwide (https://ica.coop/en/facts-and-figures).

According to the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), the Apex Body for cooperatives globally, in 2014, the world's 300 largest cooperatives and mutual societies had a combined annual turnover of US$2.5 trillion (Grace, 2014; ICA, 2017). The values on which cooperatives are based are: self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. These social economy enterprises differ from traditional forms of businesses by observing the following seven internationally agreed principles that guide their distinct identity and remain the underlying basis for their operations worldwide.

(i) **Voluntary and open membership**

The nature of cooperatives is such that they are voluntary organisations, non-discriminatory and open to all persons able to use their services and who are willing to accept responsibilities of membership.

(ii) **Democratic member control**

The uniqueness of cooperatives is that they are democratic organisations in which all members have absolute control over the strategic direction of their cooperative and they democratically exercise that right on the basis of one-member-one-vote in setting policies and making decisions, thereby ensuring a level playing field for all members regardless of their financial investment in the cooperative enterprise. Elected representatives are accountable to the membership.

(iii) **Member economic participation**

An essential characteristic of cooperatives is that members contribute equitably to the capital in order to sustain their cooperative and they take democratic decisions on how the surplus capital should be distributed. Part of the surplus generated by its economic activities is kept in reserves for the growth and development of the cooperative, its members and the community in which it serves. Members also benefit from the surplus in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative and not on the basis of their capital investments.

(iv) **Autonomy and independence**

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

(v) **Education training and information**

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, to allow for effective contribution to the development of their cooperatives; and inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

(vi) **Cooperation amongst cooperatives**

Cooperatives aim to serve their members effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

(vii) **Concern for community**.

Community development is at the forefront of the work undertaken by cooperative enterprises and they work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

In keeping with the principles and values of cooperatives as outlined above, the ICA defines cooperatives as *"an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically controlled enterprise"* (http://ica.coop/en/what-co-operative). This definition identifies them as member-owned and member-controlled social enterprises with a people-centred logic, and protects them against the governments' neoliberal policies (Satgar, 2007).

Mutuals have a similar origin to cooperative enterprises, being born out of a desire to satisfy common needs and improve the socio-economic wellbeing of their members (Cornforth, 2004). Hence mutual benefit societies are defined as "organisations that are owned by, and run for the benefit of their current and future members" (The Senate, Australia, 2016). Membership is open and free to anyone who fulfils the conditions as outlined in the Bye-laws and abides by the principles of mutualism, making them similar to cooperative societies in many respects except for the nature of their business activities. Unlike cooperative enterprises that span a range of business activities including education, the operations of mutual benefit societies are concentrated in areas of health, life insurances, banking, building, social security benefits, and health care. Mutual benefit societies are very active in Europe and fall under the aegis of the International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies (AIM)**,** the umbrella body which represents a total of 64 mutual societies in 31 countries in Europe, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East (Defourny and Develtere, 2009).

Mutual benefit societies also contribute meaningfully to economic development. In Europe alone, they are among the largest insurance companies accounting for roughly 16% of the European insurance market or roughly 180 billion euros in premiums and employ over 200,000 people (https://www.aim-mutual.org/). Cooperative enterprises and mutual societies have flourished in Australia's economy with an estimated eight in ten Australians said to belong to one of these enterprises (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). An estimated 14 million persons are said to be members of cooperatives and mutual, while approximately 1700 cooperative enterprises operate in Australia. Credit unions have positioned themselves as vibrant cooperatives maintaining competition in the financial sector and serving as viable alternatives to

commercial banks (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). The combined assets of Australia's 103 credit unions were estimated at $83 billion Australian dollars in 2013 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

The above statistics suggest that cooperative enterprises and mutual benefit societies are more than culturally specific forms of organisations (Hansmann, 1999). They are transformative and significant business alternatives that represent a substantial share of the economies of countries in which they operate and help sustain communities (Hansmann, 2000). Mondragon Cooperative University in the Basque region of Spain is an exemplar of a member/worker-owned higher education institution that was born out of a social need of the members to transform their lives and that of the community, by providing a subsidised education that is affordable and accessible to students (Altuna, 2016).

The average salary of a vice-chancellor in the UK in 2016/2017 was £290,000 an increase of 3.2% over the previous period and which is equivalent to a ratio of 3.5 times that of a professor (Hubble and Bolton, 2018:4) and 17 times that of the lowest paid academic staff. Conversely, the head of Mondragon Cooperative University receives a salary which is capped at 6.5 times that of the lowest paid worker, on the basis of the national average wage (Harrison, 2013). In 2016/2017, 10 vice-chancellors from the leading research universities in the UK and 11 vice-chancellors in Australia paid themselves salaries as high as £471,000 and £548,000 respectively with some Australian vice-chancellors already in the million dollar remuneration pay package (Hubble and Bolton, 2018:4; Times Higher Education, dated 4 June 2018). According to Hubble and Bolton (2018), there appeared to be a direct correlation between UK

vice-chancellors' pay increase and the 2012 tuition fees hike (p. 6). To justify these neo-liberal practices in contemporary public HEIs, where it is expected that students' well-being is paramount, vice-chancellors defended their take home pay by claiming that "it reflected their roles of leading extremely complex, international organisations with annual turnovers of more than half a billion pounds on average" (The Independent, dated 2 January 2014; Times Higher Education, 2018).

Meanwhile decisions regarding salaries at Mondragon Cooperative University are taken democratically and collectively by the members at the annual general meeting, allowing for transparency. The university has been widely studied and hailed a success story (Matthews, 2013; Wright, Greenwood and Boden, 2011). It epitomises how social cohesiveness among ordinary people within a community can transform the entire society (Laville and Nyssens, 2001) and the lives of members/owners of the university who work in solidarity for their mutual benefit. (Wright and Greenwood, 2017).

The demutualisation of mutual building societies in the UK, Australia and also the USA to a universal banking model during the 1980-1990, was part of government deregulation policies (Archambault, 2009) that attempted to change their identity through a process of neoliberalisation, causing mutuals to be less popular (Taylor, 2003). The government demutualisation policy could be compared to the dismantling of the binary divide in the UK and Australia and their integration into a universal university system which was discussed in chapter 2. The result has been an undifferentiated HE system and standardised curriculum, thereby affecting students' experiences beyond the university and their transition into the labor market. Similarly, demutualisation resulted in a failed shareholder banking model (Mullineux, 2014) in

the UK. The demutualisation trend was less pronounced in continental Europe, and in countries such as France and Ireland where there are specific laws in place to protect mutual societies (Archambault, 2009). In many countries around the world there is specific legislation in place to protect cooperatives, mutual and trusts organisations and guard against the separation of ownership and control. The importance of these laws to protect the interest of all owner-members and prevent predatory practices cannot be over-emphasised.

Trust Societies: A trust is a fiduciary relationship between a trustor, the trustees and beneficiaries of the trust (Mitchell, 1992). The trustor sets up an irrevocable trust fund to provide an income stream to the income beneficiaries while the trustees manage the trust for the sole purpose of the beneficiaries on the terms and conditions as outlined by the trustor in the deed of trust (Mitchell, 1992). It could be argued that the beneficiaries of the trust play a minimal role in the governance of, and management of the trust society which is controlled by the board of trustees. However there are trusts in which the beneficiaries are actively involved in governance and examples of trust models that are applicable to this thesis are those that are owned and controlled by their beneficiaries such as Deep Springs College (DSC) in the USA (Stoller and Kramer, 2018:81) and John Lewis Partnership (JLP) in the UK (Cato and Heatley, 2012).

DSC is a small higher education institution that was established by Lucien L. Nunn to prepare men not for commercial pursuits, but for leadership and men of strong moral character who would use their education to change the world by serving others (Constitution of DSC, 1975:22). Nunn was especially opposed to the ideals of capitalism which he referred to as an ‘avaricious and evil system’, noting that

educational institutions were too apt ‘to prepare their most brilliant students to be the ill-paid hirelings’ of a commercial system (p.44). The concern raised by Nunn is particularly visible in today’s neo-liberalised HE system, as universities compete with each other to satisfy the demands of the knowledge economy for skilled labour. Nunn signed over the college and all its property to the students making them beneficial owners and guaranteed in the Deed of Trust, the central engagement of the students in all decisions (Newell, 2015:256). Such an arrangement may be perceived as unconventional or frowned upon, particularly in a contemporary marketised higher education structure, where students are regarded by policymakers primarily as customers and as a steady flow of income (Collini, 2012; McGettigan, 2013). It is clear that Nunn’s intention was to empower students, viewing them not as customers, but as partners who play an active role in decisions collectively with trustees, academics and workers.

John Lewis Partnership (JLP) is another example of a trust organisation that is beneficially owned by all employees. The founder and trustor, John Spedan Lewis, signed away his personal ownership rights in his growing retail company by setting up a trust fund for all future employees to allow for perpetuity of his business model. Like cooperative enterprises with their seven guiding principles, John Lewis Partnership is also guided by seven principles that defines its operations and at the core of its mission is the ‘happiness of all members/employees through a worthwhile and satisfying employment in a successful business’ (The Constitution of JLP, p. 3). JLP differs from DSC in that the former is not a higher education institution. However, the founders had similar intentions of engaging the beneficiaries by empowering them as equal business partners and giving them the right to chart the direction of the organisation/institution

in democratic governance. JLP is a commercial business and one might ask how does it differ from the market model and by extension the 'new management' practices adopted by contemporary higher education institutions? As already mentioned, there is no ambiguity in ownership of JLP. All employees are beneficial owners, not because they have invested personal financial capital in the way that members of cooperative enterprises do, but by virtue of the fact that the partnership is owned in trust. Similar to cooperative enterprises and mutual benefit societies, ownership by their members/workers, suggest that the purpose of these businesses is aligned with those of the members and is likely to result in a deeper sense of commitment, motivation, loyalty and productivity (Birchall and Ketilson, 2009).

This is particularly true for cooperatives whose members have a financial stake in the enterprise. Thus, social economy enterprises represent the logical development of management into a profession with a human-centred ethic at the core of their practice (Davis and Donaldson, 1998; Takamura, 1995). At JLP, the employees have an absolute legal right of possession and control of the Partnership and to appropriate its residual earnings or net surplus (Hansmann, 2000) on the basis of beneficial ownership; albeit doing so on democratic principles and through the sharing of power among the members and representative bodies (The Constitution of JLP, p. 9). John Lewis Partnership is estimated to have annual gross sales of over £10bn.

While JLP, like cooperative enterprises and mutual benefit societies, are managed by representative bodies including trustees (in the case of JLP and DSC), there are checks and balances in place and as de jure owners, members are legally authorised to have effective control over their assets and to demand managerial accountability by

democratically ratifying decisions of critical importance at annual general meetings (Demsetz, 1983). These decisions may include mergers, expansion, dissolution, capital expenditure, selection of board members and approval of auditors.

In the case of contemporary public universities, accountability is not so clear cut because there are no legal owners for management to report to, making it unclear who should monitor whom (Speckbacher, 2003) when senior management abuse their power for their own self-interest (Keasey, et al., 2005). Instead, control[11] (Ceffins, 2008; Eilon, 1971; Fama and Jensen, 1983), lie in the hands of 'chief executive officers' and a few senior managers with a managerial logic, who see themselves as de facto owners of HEIs (Boden, Ciancanelli and Wright, 2012) with the right to strategically direct these institutes (Claessens, Djankov and Lang, 2000; Laporta, Lopez-De-Silanes and Shelifer, 1999) on behalf of their stakeholders (students, academics, alumni, workers). Meanwhile, it is reassuring to note that the debate and research on cooperative education is being promoted even at the level of schools in the UK, with more than 600 school academies operating within a cooperative structure while registered as trusts and funded by the state (Woodin, 2014).

Governance of Social Economy Enterprises

The term governance continues to be a contested subject (Braun & Merrien, 1999; Keasey, Thompson and Wright, 2005), due to its polysemy. The European Central Bank (2004) defines governance as 'the procedures and processes according to which an organisation is directed and controlled'. However societal care has been left out as a

[11] the authority to direct or to govern

feature of good governance. For the purpose of this study, I use the definition provided by Solomon (2013) which is: 'the system of checks and balances, both internal and external to organisations, which ensures that they discharge their accountability to all stakeholders and act in a socially responsible way in all areas of their business activity' (p.7).

Conflict between the interest of shareholders in market-oriented organisations to maximise the return on their investment (Windsor and Boatright, 2010) and the private interest of salaried executives to enrich themselves (Keasey, Thompson and Wright, 2005), have led to modes of governance that brought many companies into disrepute (Holt and Eccles, 2003; Horn, 2005). This was particularly the case in the 1990s when a spate of corporate accounting scandals in the UK, USA and other parts of the world raised concerns about the unchecked powers of control of senior management which enabled the enrichment of self, at the expense of stakeholders and called for stakeholders to be more actively involved in the governance of their corporation (Keasey, Thompson and Wright, 2005).

As mentioned earlier social economy enterprises are owned and operated by their members whose primary objectives are social rather than economic (Hudson, 2009), therefore they have a responsibility to the wider society particularly in matters of externality. It means that the owners are themselves the employees and could also be the patrons of the business. These enterprises are governed by their members through a democratic process of one member one vote (Harnecker, 2012) at special and annual general meetings (Cornforth, 2002). This suggest that all members have an equal say in strategic decisions of the business/institution, including who they want to lead them

in governance, placing their shared-interest above any personal interest, in the event of misunderstandings or disputes.

The growing commercialisation of many organisations in the non-profit sector has become a major cause for concern (Weisbrod, 2000), notably where decisions are taken by senior managers who are not the residual owners and whose objective differ from that of stakeholders. According to Wright and Greenwood (2017), this has become a concern in contemporary public higher education institutions in that, "stakeholders (students, faculty, staff and administration) are not held together by shared interests and understandings" (p. 47). The writers argue that "this group competes with each other and relations between them are ordered by the apex of authority" (senior managers) suggesting a top-down and punitive approach to governance in HE (Newell, 2000) in contrast to the bottom up and pluralist approach to governance practiced within social economy enterprises (Ridley-Duff and Bull, 2015).

Meanwhile, Brayshaw (1992) notes that where the organisation is managed and controlled by the same person(s) as is the case with social economy enterprises, the likelihood of a possible conflict in objectives is eliminated. He argues that the solidarity among stakeholders can also create 'a capital of solid trust', thus restraining the potential for opportunistic behaviour (Laville and Nyssens, 2001). This element of 'trust' is a pathology in the governance of contemporary higher education institutions that Wright and Greenwood (2017) have lamented. Donaldson and Davis (1991) also notes that when individual goals are aligned to organisational goals, this facilitates a win-win situation for all in that workers are motivated, stakeholder interests are protected and managers are able to self-actualise. This unity of purpose among

members should lead to best practices rather than ‘worst practices’ that have come to define the neoliberal structures of contemporary public higher education institutions, according to Wright and Greenwood (2017: 48).

The governance practices of social economy enterprises like cooperatives, mutual and employee-owned trusts is consistent with stewardship theory. This theory highlights that the benefit of the organisation is displayed when management and stakeholders share the same interests and roles (Donaldson and Davis, 1991). In other words, stewardship theory of governance assumes mutual trusts between management and stakeholders who work collaboratively as partners for a common good, eliminating the need to provide management with financial incentives to avoid the possibility of individual opportunistic behaviour (Caldwell and Karri, 2005). Board members are elected on the basis of their skills and competencies to add value and to improve the overall performance of the enterprises for the benefit of all stakeholders. However, Cornforth (2004) claims that because members are elected through a democratic process it means that professionals with relevant expertise are not always appointed to the board to make it effective (p. 4). Management expertise has been a weakness inherent in some of these enterprises particularly among cooperatives in the agricultural and fishing sectors. The fifth cooperative principle seeks to address this weakness through education, training and information among elected representatives, managers, and employees to enable them to contribute effectively to the development of their business (http://ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles).

Financing of Social Economy Enterprises

In a market model economy, corporate financial managers make entrenchment investments that are optimal for them, in an attempt at becoming irreplaceable, but which might not be done with the primary objective of enhancing stakeholders experiences (Daily, Dalton and Cannella, 2003). This practice is already rolling out in contemporary public HEIs as the business strategy appears to show a preference for large numbers of international student recruitment (Cato and Heatley, 2012) mainly for economic reasons. The marketisation and commercialisation of universities also redirects focus away from providing students with a quality pedagogical experience, to commercialised research exemplified in the REF[12] and RAE[13], (Ball, 2012) with the aim of topping league tables and marketing their brand (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009; Meek, 2000).

Social economy enterprises are financed in various ways. The trust organisation/institution mentioned in this chapter were initially financed by means of an irrevocable trust by the founders to ensure perpetuity of their intended social enterprise ventures. Meanwhile cooperatives and mutual benefit societies receive their capital outlay from members who have a personal financial stake in the business. While the sustainable financing of these enterprises are sometimes put into question, the spirit of solidarity have keep them rooted and allowed them to bounce back.

[12] Research Excellence Framework in the UK
[13] Research Assessment Exercise in Australia

Riley-Duff (2015) offers the FairShares Model as an interesting approach to sustain the financing mechanism of social economy enterprises and this is consistent with what is being proposed in this thesis. The FairShares Model offers a scheme of communal shares to help in development of the social economy and social enterprises and to provide fair and equitable distribution of wealth. This form of networking in which a number of primary stakeholders in the social economy and social enterprise are able to pull their financial and other resources together in unity of purpose based on cooperative principles, is pivotal if this sub-sector of the economy is expected to bring about social equity in a dominant market-based economy.

Like cooperative enterprises, all members of John Lewis Partnership share in any surplus/profits realised by the business at the end of the year; a percentage which is determined by the members themselves who exercise their power about how profits are allocated. Gibson-Graham (2006) argues that 'it is in this arena of decision-making that the strong commitment to people over capital and community over individual comes to the fore' (p. 115).

3.4 Summary

In this chapter I have argued that in a hegemonic neo-liberalised market economy where money, power and control have become major driving forces, corporate executive management have frequently taken advantage of de facto ownership title. The unchecked market model governance structure may have facilitated senior managers in advancing their personal interests, whether it is for personal pecuniary gain or for professional and social status. Contemporary public HE institutions in the UK and

Australia are not immune to this phenomenon, with their neo-liberal practices that have transitioned students into paying customers and education into a commodity.

The chapter situates social economy enterprises as alternative social business models within the global political economy and highlights the features that enable them to operate differently from the neo-liberalised models that are increasingly being adopted by contemporary public higher education institutions. The chapter argues that an emphasis on people over capital is the only way in which HEIs will be able to serve the public interest and ensure equality of access for all students regardless of their socio-economic status.

Social economy enterprises are already regarded all over the world as sustainable businesses. In the UK the Conservative government while in opposition, pledged support for the formation of more of these enterprises, recognising their £55 billion annual contributor to the UK economy (Lord Maude, 2015) and the need to bring them into the wider debate for reshaping public service delivery. Of significance, the Conservative government acknowledged the successes of social economy enterprises and their ability to nurture greater power for individuals over their economic lives (Lord Maude, 2015), increase the accountability of managers and place customers, employees and stakeholders on a more equal footing while achieving greater financial rewards and better business results consequent upon the appeal of their social mission. The next chapter deals with the methodological framework for the thesis. It discusses the empirical approach to data collection and analysis as well as the ethical issues involved and the epistemological underpinnings of the research.

Chapter 4

Methodological Approach

4.1 Introduction

I seek to explore ways in which higher education institutions might be reconfigured along the lines of social economy enterprises to address the neoliberal trends in the UK and Australia in which students have been recast as consumers. I sought institutions where education has been claimed to take place in more participative and meaningful ways with a greater focus on under-privileged students and student participation in institutional governance and operations.

In this chapter I discuss the philosophical underpinning of this research study and the rationale for its use. I also address the strategy, population sample and methods used for data collection, and how the data was analysed. I focus on some ethical issues involved in conducting the research, and how I approached the validity and reliability of the data. Finally, I provide some perspectives on researcher reflexivity in the conduct of the research process and discuss the limitations to the study.

4.2 Research Questions

The principal research question outlined in Chapter 1 is: How do heterodox higher education institutional forms differ from orthodox university forms in relation to ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure? I will address this question with three subsidiary questions:

(i) What are the current forms of university ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure in the UK and Australia?

(ii) What are the consequences of these regimes for student access and experiences?

(iii) What alternative models of ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure might be constituted into new higher education institutional forms and how might these enhance students experiences?

4.3 Philosophical Underpinnings and Theoretical Paradigm of This Study

The central aim of this research is to explore heterodox forms of higher education institutions in the context of the intensification of neoliberal forms, specifically the marketised, entrepreneurial higher education systems found in the UK and Australia. The conduct of any research is informed by a 'basic set of beliefs that guides action' (Guba, 1990:17) and this research is no exception. Due to the research questions and the central aim of this study, a positivist approach to the research or simply issuing questionnaires to respondents would not address the research questions. Hence I followed a qualitative paradigm to the study and adopted a social constructionism approach whose ontological underpinning is that there is no single reality but that reality is seen through multiple perspectives. Epistemologically, the viewpoint of social constructionism is that the social world is not always predictable but rather, knowledge and 'meaningful reality' are socially constructed (Andrews, 2012; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Jones, Torres and Arminio, 2014) in a social setting, in and out of interaction

with participants (Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Schwandt, 2007) and through historical and cultural norms (Creswell, 2013). In other words, the social world is produced and transmitted in a social context, through interpretation between researcher and those being researched to derive meaning (Crotty, 1998:42; Pascale, 2011:22). Consequently, I had to immerse myself in the case-study institutions to understand the experiences of persons working and studying in those alternative models and how students understood their experiences or the meaning that they gave to their experiences. I also brought my own interpretation to bear and my reflexive-self into the research process because as a qualitative researcher, reflexivity does not allow me to divorce myself from the research setting. Of significance is that apart from the experiences of participants in these alternative models and my own reflexivity, I drew on the voices of persons in the field. I listened to what scholars were saying in the literature about the neoliberal practices in the orthodox HEI model and sought to address the research questions by interpreting this phenomenon alongside the meaning that participants in the alternative case-study institutions gave to their own experiences.

This study is therefore grounded in the interpretive framework of social constructionism because it seeks understanding of the anatomy of these unorthodox higher educational institutions and how participants construct the meaning of their experiences, working and studying there (Orlikowski and Baroudi 1991). It helps elucidate what students understand access to mean and what they interpret a good educational experience to be. It clarifies participants' understanding of, and the extent to which they are involved in the ownership, governance, financing and operations of these institutional forms. It also guided my approach to the observation process and how I interpreted the observation data.

It is my role as a constructionist researcher to interpret and derive understanding of the meaning that participants attach to their social world. To gain knowledge through the subjective experiences of participants necessitated that I had to minimize the "objective separateness" or "distance" between myself and those being researched (Guba and Lincoln, 1988:94) by being physically present at the research site. Additionally, the institutions identified for this case-study are historically and culturally situated in the communities in which they operate and should therefore add to the richness and depth of knowledge about the phenomenon. The philosophical assumption of an interpretivism paradigm is consistent with a qualitative inquiry, which framed my development of the research questions to guide this study and to explore the phenomenon of how different forms of higher education impact student access and pedagogical experience.

4.4 Research Strategy

The methodological approach to this empirical study has taken two different forms. Firstly, I conducted empirical research in the orthodox HEIs in the UK and Australia using interviews as the basis for data collection. Secondly, a multiple case-study was undertaken, the exploration of a real-life multiple bounded systems of four heterodox higher educational institutions operating within the social economy in Europe[14], India and the US. I used the case-study approach for the heterodox HEIs because it has the benefit of developing different views of reality, including the awareness that human behaviour cannot be understood merely as an act that is driven by a rule or a theory (Starman, 2013). "The desire to evaluate individualised client outcomes is also a major

[14] To be more specific with the location could compromise the institution

reason why case-studies may be conducted" as advanced by Patton (1990:99). A case-study approach provides a path for me to combine praxis and theory by positioning myself in the research setting (Patton, 2002) in order to gain an in-depth understanding of ways in which heterodox higher education institutional forms differ from orthodox forms in relation to ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure. It also allowed for exploration, through an interpretive lens, what are the salient features in the ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure of these peculiar institutional models that might be adapted/adopted to reconfigure higher educational institutions, thereby enhancing students (clients) educational experiences. This 'in-depth understanding' of the phenomenon of interest, is what Creswell (2013) claims to be a hallmark of a good qualitative case-study (p. 98).

A case-study is defined by Creswell (2013) as an approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (p. 97). I adopted a multiple bounded systems strategy instead of a single case approach involving interviews, focus group meetings, observations and documentation review to allow for comparison of these alternative models within their contemporary real-world setting (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). This strategy facilitated interpretation in gaining a clearer understanding of how these models are constituted and operated, what are the ways in which they are socially and economically beneficial to participants of the study and to draw conclusions about the phenomenon (Stake, 2000). Also how insights gleaned from the case-study investigations could lead to a rethinking of higher education institutional forms (Merriam, 2009) for the benefit of students in terms of widened access and pedagogy.

4.5 Selection of Research Sites and Case-Study Institutions

This research is part of a wider European Commission funded project under the Marie Curie Initial Training Programme called UNIKE (Universities in the Knowledge Economy). This project is involved in conducting original research regarding the changing roles and scope of universities in emerging global knowledge economies by comparing developments both in Europe and the Asia-Pacific rim. To this end, European governments have responded to international agendas for university reform proposed by organisations such as the European Union, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, World Economic Forum, UNESCO and the World Bank on the understanding that the future lies in the development of an ideas-driven, competitive global knowledge economy.

I have undertaken to focus the thesis on the higher education systems in the UK and Australia to gain a more profound understanding of the current trajectory which appears to be skewed towards marketisation and neo-liberalisation of the sector. The aim is not merely to critique the status quo but through this qualitative study, to offer transformative solutions that might enhance students' educational experience in terms of access and pedagogy.

According to Stake (1994) nothing is more paramount than making a proper selection of cases to be studied (p. 243). This is particularly applicable to this research inquiry because identifying the right cases to address the research questions posed a bit of a challenge at first (Creswell, 2013). Exemplars of these 'spaces of hope' (Morris, 2001) among the cooperatives, trust, mutual or worker-owned types are not plentiful therefore

while the geographical focus of this research is the UK and Australia, I scouted the world in search of these new imaginaries which are not present in the UK and Australia. There are some internationally, amongst higher education institutions and also some in the commercial world that are worker/students owned; operate on the basis of democratic self-governance; managed by faculty, students and staff; are financed by the membership; promote accessibility by addressing social justice issues and where a Socratic method informs the pedagogy.

One university and two colleges in Europe and America were recommended by my first director of studies and another professor in the UNIKE project, both of whom have a deep interest in my research field and are au fait with the uniqueness and success stories of these institutions. I also conducted a search of the Web and was able to identify an additional university in the Asian region. These four institutions – two universities and two small colleges were selected through the process of purposeful maximal sampling (Creswell, 2012) for case-studies, not because of preference for a particular geographical location, but because of where these alternative models currently exist in the world. More substantively, they illustrate some key features in which I am interested (Silverman, 2010) and would provide different perspectives to the research questions (Creswell, 2013). Efforts were made in writing and by telephone to undertake a case-study of a large employee-owned organisation in the UK, outside of higher education. I received assurances from a senior officer that the necessary arrangement would be made and that I would be contacted, but this did not materialise.

4.6 Participant Selection

The quality of the data collected largely depends upon the participants in the study (Morse, 2007). It was therefore important for me to identify participants who were directly a part of, and were sufficiently knowledgeable about the phenomenon to answer the research questions (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011) and to add richness and credibility to the data collection process (Jones, Torres and Arminio, 2014). Based on the purpose of this study which sets out to explore heterodox forms of higher educational institutions whose forms of ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure are different from the main stream orthodox types and which focuses on enhancing students' educational experiences in terms of access and pedagogy, my population was identified using a heterogeneous purposeful sampling technique (Maxwell, 2005; Saunders, 2012).

As Saunders (2012) observes, heterogeneous purposive sampling allows the researcher to use judgement in choosing participants with sufficiently diverse characteristics to provide the maximum variation possible in the data collected, by ensuring that participants are included from all departments and across all levels of the hierarchy (p. 40). The need for group diversity was taken into consideration in the design of this study. I identified participants across case-study institutions involving top senior officials, departmental heads, academics and students from various academic disciplines and academic years.

Two sets of participants were identified for this research - those involved in the case-studies such as vice chancellors/presidents/deputy vice chancellors of each institution,

chief financial officers, academic staff, deans of divisions and students. The other set which comprised an aggregate of 7 participants were made up of chief executive officers and/or chief financial officers selected for interviews only and were drawn from contemporary orthodox universities and the umbrella bodies representing these universities in the UK and Australia. Additionally, a senior executive from the international apex body of one of the social economy enterprises was interviewed. This apex organisation is involved in policy and advocacy on behalf of its members internationally. The purpose of these interviews was to discuss policy issues, as well as to gain the perspective of participants on the proposed heterodox model and to determine in what ways they could support such a model. These groups were purposefully selected in order to obtain rich contextual data about the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 1990). The individual interviews among contemporary higher education institutions were conducted prior to the case-studies.

4.7 Gaining Entry to the Research Setting and Access to Participants

Gaining entry to the research site could often pose challenges for researchers (Feldman, Bell and Berger, 2004; Monahan and Fisher, 2015). For me as the investigator, it meant negotiating the nature of the field work that I intended to carry out and gaining actual physical entry into the field setting to begin the data collection process (Patton, 1990). Negotiation with gatekeepers and key informants (Jones, Torres, Arminio, 2014) was crucial for this aspect of the research. Through an exchange of emails with a senior professor in the UNIKE project I was able to secure the contact details of two senior executives in two of the case-study institutions. I also requested and received assurances for a brief initial introduction with the senior executives on my behalf. A quick online

investigation also provided me with the contact numbers of the other two institutions. I first made initial telephone contacts with each of the four unorthodox institutions to introduce myself and my research project and also to seek permission to undertake a two-week case-study of the institution at a mutually convenient time. These telephone conversations went very well and I was asked to forward in writing exactly what my needs were and that they would seek to facilitate me. There was a bit of initial uncertainty with one of the institutions which has a somewhat closed policy to the public. They required a lot more detail and what I expected to gain from them. I had already received some information from my own research and from my key informant about the institution and was able to lay out in detail the purpose and objective of my visit and the role that this institution and participants would play as I explore a heterodox university model that might enhance students' educational experiences.

I proceeded to confirm my telephone conversations with the institutions officially in writing and to give assurances that the study was being undertaken for the sole purpose of my research and that all information would be held in strict confidence. I outlined in the correspondence that I was seeking to interview persons who could provide context rich information on ownership, governance, financing and the organisational structure for a duration of one hour. I also asked for two focus group interviews of a maximum of 7 students in each group to discuss matters of access and teaching and learning, as well as a focus group/individual interviews with academic staff.

I provided management with a matrix of a preliminary itinerary of how I wished to proceed while in the field. I was careful to invite management to feel free to develop the final programme and to include any other participants they deemed necessary to

enable me to achieve the research objective. This strategy ensured management's interest in supporting the process and ascertained that the right mix of participants was available for interviews and focus group meetings. Most importantly, all participants would be available to provide me with their full cooperation throughout the process. A sample of the official correspondence is contained in Appendix 5.

I remained in constant contact with each institution via email for any clarification that was sought and for my approval of the final detailed programme that was developed by management of each institution allowing me access to many more heads of departments than anticipated. One institution allowed me entry for 11 days and went as far as arranging an interview between me and the Chief Minister of Government with responsibility for that geographical area where the institution is located and two press conferences with the local media. Two institutions allowed entry for one week which they assured me would be sufficient time in which to accomplish my objective. I was given three days with the smallest institution which worked out to be sufficient time.

I followed a similar approach in contacting persons to engage in the individual interviews. Initial telephone contact was made with the secretaries of these heads of institutions in contemporary higher education, which was followed up in writing with proposed dates for conducting interviews at the place of business. All interviewees agreed with my dates and suggested a time when they would be available to speak with me to which I complied. In the case of the senior executive from the umbrella body of one of the social economy enterprises, I had initial difficulty making contact to visit at the official office for an interview because this individual was on regular travel duty. I was eventually informed by the secretary that this individual would be in attendance at

a conference that I was also planning on attending and this information firmed my decision. I asked the secretary to arrange a one hour interview between myself and the senior executive which was confirmed and reported back to me a few days later via email. My fieldwork started in November 2014 and the entire process of data collection was completed in September 2015.

4.8 Methods of Data Collection

In carrying out the investigation into this study I employed multiple methods involving a combination of interviews, focus groups, observation and document analysis. Individual interviews were the preferred choice for collecting data from executives within the contemporary orthodox higher education institutions on policy issues. However, the use of case-studies among unorthodox forms of higher educational institutions necessitated a triangulation approach since fieldwork involves the use of more than a single method (Patton, 1990), thus ensuring the reliability of information.

A total of three weeks ranging between 5 days to 11 days was spent at the four case-study institutions between November 2014 and September 2015, carrying out participant observation; visiting the different faculties; conducting interviews with management on issues of ownership, governance, financing and structure of these institutions. The field visits involved 49 individual semi-structured interviews with academics, senior officials and administrative staff/heads of departments, some of which included two or three persons. I further engaged students in 5 different focus group meetings of 7-8 persons each, for the duration of one hour to one hour and fifteen minutes, to discuss their teaching and learning experiences and key issues they face in these types of social economy organisations. I also took the opportunity to conduct

individual interviews with 5 students from two institutions as I moved around during the field visit. The number of all respondents across the study is represented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Participants across the Study

	Countries		**Case-Study Institutions**			
Respondents	**UK**	**Australia**	**Unity**	**Gramuco**	**Batista**	**Davena**
Government Minister				1		
Umbrella body of universities	1	2				
Umbrella body of social economy enterprise	1					
Head of HE institutions		2	1	1	1	1
Head of finance		1	1	-	1	1
Heads of dept. including deans.			5	2	14	4
Academics			1	12	1	2
Council members*			-	-	✓	-
Total Individual Interviews	**2**	**5**	**8**	**16**	**17**	**8**
Focus groups with students			1	2	1	1
Individual interviews with students			-	-	2	3

*Made brief acquaintance at the Council Meeting

Pilot Testing

Pilot testing has been recommended by Yin (2009) and Sampson (2004) to develop relevant lines of questions and to refine the interview questions. In July 2014, I pilot tested my initial research questions in a focus group discussion involving a diverse group of students at my university in London using a set of open-ended questions. Participants were purposefully selected and included PhD students as well as an undergraduate student from another university. The intention was to help me determine whether I would be able to get meaningful responses from participants for my main study (Silverman, 2010).

I sought to gain from the pilot focus group discussion the perspective of students on the neoliberal practices in contemporary higher education, how this phenomenon has impacted on their lives financially, what was the quality of the pedagogy, and the group's opinion on a proposed heterodox model of higher education institution in which students will have beneficial ownership and participate in democratic governance. Respondents spoke at length on the issues and raised pertinent points that brought interesting perspectives to bear in relation to a heterodox model which were very useful and facilitated further development and refining of the main research questions (Creswell, 2013) to assist me in capturing good data during the fieldwork.

i. Interviews

I conducted one-to-one interviews with senior officials of two elite universities and three representative organisations for higher education in the UK and Australia. I also

conducted one interview with a high ranking official of the umbrella body for a social economy enterprise. Initial contact was made with each chief executive by telephone to introduce my research project and to seek permission to conduct these interviews in the respective organisations at a mutually convenient date. In every instance the telephone request was followed up with an official email and a matrix of the intended issues to be discussed, identifying the proposed target audience for the interviews as well as any other person/s that management deemed appropriate to participate in these sessions. The purpose of these interviews was to discuss policy matters and issues of ownership/control, governance, financing and the organisational structure of contemporary public universities in order to inform development of a heterodox model.

All individual interviews were conducted in the offices of respondents or in a quiet office arranged by the participants at their respective institutions between the months of January and May 2015 except for the representative of the social economy enterprise which was held in a quiet area free from distractions, during a conference in the UK. Before commencement of each interview I introduced myself and the purpose of my study (Creswell, 2013). I again reminded respondents that the information provided was being collected for the sole purpose of informing the development of heterodox university models that would have beneficial outcomes for students and would at no time be disclosed to a third party without their expressed permission. Interviews are such that people will reveal far more than they originally intended to under the promise of confidentiality (Patton, 1990) and while it seemed necessary to achieve the aims of my research, respect for boundaries was equally important.

I sought respondents consent for their participation in the study and introduced a copy of the *participant consent form* to each respondent (where there was more than one present at an interview session), allowing a few minutes for them to read through the form and to affix their signatures if they agreed to proceed. They were further reminded that the interview was being undertaken voluntarily and that they had the option to withdraw at any stage in the process without giving a reason, if they did not feel comfortable enough to proceed. All respondents gave assurances as willing participants by signing the consent form. I sought permission to record the entire interview on audiotape. This allowed me to capture direct quotations which could otherwise have been lost during questioning and note taking and would add integrity to the data. Recording of the sessions also provided an opportunity for me to build rapport and dialogue with participants during the interview sessions.

I conducted semi-structured interviews as this approach served to ensure flexibility in the way issues were addressed by respondents and allowed for an open detailed response from participants (Longhurst, 2003). I engaged in very natural conversations enabling each interview process to run smoothly. Interviews varied in length from one hour to one hour and 15 minutes. While respondents were informed in the official letter that interviews should last no more than one hour, the extra 15 minutes taken by some could be attributed to the fact that they felt very comfortable and relaxed and were willing to share as much information as they could to ensure the success of my assignment. I was also asked to feel free to contact them for any follow-up information that I required. Some respondents also recommended other institutions/individuals they thought would benefit my study. During the conduct of the interviews I was guided by a predesigned interview protocol matrix (Table 4.2) of the issues that I needed to

address in order to understand the policy decisions behind the neo-liberalisation of contemporary higher education and its implications for students. Lead open-ended questions were asked of respondents.

Table 4.2: Interview protocol Matrix used to Support the Method of Data Collection

Issues to be Explored	Method	Why are these Issues Important
Ownership and how this impacts on organisational culture and decision making	Interviews Institutional records	Who owns the institution and how do the owners influence what goes on in there
Governance arrangements	Interviews Records/document on governance and mission	To determine how strategic decisions are made within the framework of the institution and how it affects members and the community at large; To determine the internal decision making processes; To understand the governance processes around teaching and learning in terms of how decisions are made, - who decides what courses are taught - curricula, hiring practices etc.).
The institution's **financing** mechanism, assets and resources	Interviews Financial records	To get an understanding of how the institution sustains itself and finance its operations Determine who owns the assets as well as the distribution of surplus Whether there is a policy/culture towards the type of student recruited (local vs international) How the fee structure is determined and how it reflects the nature of the organisation
The **organisational structure** and issues of power and control	Interviews Minutes Organisational chart Observation	To understand how decisions are made within the institution, who reports to whom and the relationship between management and employees
Issues of **access**	Interviews Focus group	To understand how accessible the institution is to students within the

	Policy documents	region; the type of students who are recruited; what issues they have; where do they come from? Are they full-time or part-time, whether they work in the community, how do they access accommodation, etc.
Pedagogical practices and understanding	Interviews Personnel records Observation	To gain an understanding of the teaching techniques used within the institution To understand the competencies of teaching staff in preparing students with the necessary skills to enable them to become independent thinkers and to be absorbed into the wider community
Strategy towards curriculum development	Interviews Focus groups Documents Observation	To be enlightened about how the curriculum is developed; Who decides on what to include in the curriculum; The type of programmes included in the curriculum
The institution's wider network within higher education	Interviews	To explore how the institution responds to the business community and its demands for skilled graduates To understand the effect of government policies on the institution

I also sought to gain an understanding of this phenomenon from the perspective of the umbrella organisation for social economy enterprises and to obtain answers in relation to their perception of heterodox higher education institutional forms and what support in terms of policy if any, would this umbrella organisation provide to a heterodox model. I followed up each interview with other questions in areas where I sought to clarify previous responses. My academic and professional communications background brought out the importance of listening as an effective communication skill rather than a frequent speaker (Creswell, 2013), and I used this strategy to my advantage in order to benefit from the richness of information that emanated from the interview sessions.

A similar procedure was followed in conducting interviews with case-study institutions. Interviews were held with management personnel, chief financial officers, academic staff and heads of divisions of each of these unorthodox institutions at their offices. Because the interviews were pre-arranged by the institutions, they went according to schedule and participants were well prepared for my arrival and had lots of documents and learning material available to hand out to me. I was unable to interview one head of department from one of the institutions due to illness during the time of my field visit.

ii Focus Groups

I held a total of five focus group interviews with 35 students across the four case-study institutions. The students formed a heterogeneous group and this was necessary to embrace diversity during the group interview (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2011). Four groups comprised a total of 5-7 undergraduate students while one group consisted of undergraduate and master's degree students. The purpose for choosing this method of data collection was to obtain differing points of view (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009) among a larger group of students in order to generate more spontaneous and expressive viewpoints when people come together in an uninhibited lively discussion than when interviewed individually (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009).

Similar to my approach in the individual interviews I began by introducing myself and the purpose of my study to enable participants to exercise their right to make an informed decision whether or not to participate (Nnebue, 2010). I handed out a copy of the participant consent form to each student to read and to sign on the dotted line as

an indication of their intention to participate voluntarily in the focus group. I received consensus and the cooperation of all students. It is important to mention here that all students who participated in the focus group interviews were selected by their institution using the guidelines that I provided prior to my field visit. It was therefore necessary for me to develop a good rapport with students and to gain their trust and respect (Patton, 1990) throughout the process. I reassured students that whatever was discussed in the room would be held in strict confidence and that they should feel free to speak out openly without reservation.

I sought permission to audio tape each focus group session. This was necessary because of the specific concerns usually generated by focus groups concerning invasion of privacy (Smith, 1995) especially whenever taping is the primary means of data collection. I began each focus group interview with the open-ended question: "why did you choose to study at this institution?" Some of the other questions raised in the focus group were: "how do you finance your education?" how influential are you in impacting governance decisions? "what is your teaching and learning experience so far at this institution?" and "what would you say to someone wishing to study at this institution and why?" At one particular institution in which the focus group started immediately following a small formal opening to welcome me, all academic staff sat in on the focus group interview although my official correspondence stated otherwise. Because of my experience as a former HR practitioner, I immediately sensed that the responses from students sounded rehearsed and they were not really being themselves. I then paused and gently asked the academic staff if they would kindly allow this to be a closed session between me and the students to enable students to express themselves for depth of information. They agreed and promptly left.

The departure of academics from the room made a huge difference in the composure of students and the quality of interaction and information shared by them, which was more open and candid and at the same time illuminating, when the focus group interview was reconvened. For all focus group interviews I assumed the role of facilitator but yet I was very casual, trying not to exert any power authority on students. I posed questions and allowed for the full engagement and participation of all students in the discussions (Acocella, 2012) without any one person dominating the group (Fontana and Frey, 2008). See Table 4.3 which outlines the types of data collected in case-study institutions.

iii. Observation

For this study I used observation as a tool for collecting data whilst in the field setting (Angrosino, 2007; Dewalt and Dewalt, 2002) and for understanding the intricacies within these alternative higher educational institutions in ways that would not be possible using the insights of others through interviews. These observations shed light on how decisions were taken and who took those decisions within the institution, how classes were conducted, the role of students, relationship between students, faculty and staff and observed situations described by respondents during the interview. I was able to fully engage with students, academic staff and management personnel whom I chose to observe and to establish rapport with all parties under observation (Angrosino, 2007). At one of these institutions which is owned by all students, faculty and staff in which students have equal voting rights at the annual general assembly, I spent one week making general observations of the physical settings, the research centres, the various faculties and taking notes. I observed students in the classroom, in the engineering

department and at work in the factory shops, handling various sophisticated equipment. I also got to view a 45 minutes video of the origins of the institution and its founder. This video provided me with a better perspective of the institution and as the saying goes "a picture speaks a thousand words". I gained an awareness of where the institution came from and how far it has come to be the success story that it is now known for.

Table 4.3: Types of Data Collected in the Case-Study Institutions

Institution	Country	Interviews	Observations	Focus Group
Unity University	Europe	Head of Institution; Director of Marketing; Heads of faculty; Finance Director; Heads of faculty Academic staff	✓	Students
Gramuco University	India	Head of Institution; Government Minister; Head of Finance Individual academics	✓	Students, Academics
Davena College	USA	Head of Institution; Dean of Faculty; Finance Personnel; Academics President of Student Body; Individual students	✓	Students
Batista College	USA	Head of Institution; Senior Executives; Senior administrative staff; Heads of faculty; Academics	✓	Students

I spent eleven days at another institution in India where I received a reception befitting of a head of state. While there I interviewed the Chief Minister to get an understanding of the policy directives which resulted in the establishment of this particular institution and its role in the community. I made a power-point presentation to the entire faculty and students on the purpose of my research. The head of the institution had also arranged two press conferences for me with various media houses in which I briefed

the media on the work that I was carrying out in-country. These sessions demonstrated the interest and buy-in of management for my research area and gave me an opportunity to make initial contact with many of the individuals that I subsequently interviewed. This institution is temporarily located in rented premises and I was able to visit the site where it will be permanently relocated. I also visited and held meetings with executive management personnel of a number of affiliate member organisations where students are sent on internships.

I spent one week at a case-study institution in the USA and attended a Division Council Meeting in which I met with all heads of division and other management personnel, and briefed them on my research and the purpose of my field visit to the institution. I was not allowed to sit in for the full duration of the meeting but I did get to interview some of these officials during my stay at the institution. I was accommodated at an impressive hotel owned by the institution and during that time I got to see students in action at work on the property. In fact every time I ate at the hotel I was professionally served by a student. I also got to observe students on the college's animal and crop farm, to see them practice apiculture and also performing work in the craft factory weaving chair throwbacks, shawls and making brooms, baskets, etc., which they get to sell in the students craft shop on campus.

The students work in every department of the institution as part of their compulsory labour programme which defines the curriculum. I participated in an educational student-led Friday lunch consistently held by the institution, where I got to observe the close-up interaction between students, faculty and management, and listened to presentations by students and faculty in which they share with a much wider group,

their rich learning experiences from visiting different countries together as an institutional activity and learning about those cultures. The lunch prepared each Friday is reflective of a particular country's culture. This weekly activity is also part of the school's curriculum and one way in which the institution exposes students to different countries and cultures as a practical learning experience to foster tolerance and mutual respect for others and for diverse cultures and backgrounds in keeping with the institution's maxim. While there I also forfeited the opportunity to have a one-on-one interview with some other students.

I spent three days at another remote institution in the USA. I got the opportunity to engage with the small community of students, faculty and staff. I also sat on a student-led, student-chaired curriculum development meeting and a selection committee meeting, as I observed students deliberate on important issues and take major decisions on matters of curriculum and recruitment of academic staff. I was accommodated on campus and as I went jogging around the premises between 5.00 and 5.30 every morning, students would already be awake performing their labour duties, which also form part of their curriculum, like milking cows, collecting eggs, preparing breakfast in the kitchen for everyone or studying quietly in a corner of the main building. I enjoyed three delicious daily meals with students and faculty, complements of the institution, and prepared by students themselves who served as sous chef while other students cleaned up after meals. I got the opportunity to sit in a classroom and to observe the teaching and learning practices of students.

Classrooms are deliberately small with a student to teacher ratio of about 6:1. What immediately caught my attention was a Socratic method which defines the pedagogy

and the professor's role as facilitator. I attended one of the weekly public speaking activities in which students develop their oratory prowess before an audience of their peers, faculty and staff, in a persuasive, confident and intellectual manner for the duration of 10-15 minutes each and receive feedback from professors and peers. Videotaping is not a method that I used across cases but I did videotape some of those public speaking moments. The primary aim of my study is to gain an in-depth understanding of forms of ownership, governance, financing, organisational structure as well as how/what students learn and access to these institutions. It is not merely to make comparisons in consistency of methods used across cases.

iv. Document Analysis

While in the field I collected substantial amount of documents both from contemporary higher education institutions during my interviews and from the case-study institutions. These documents included strategic plans, financial statements, policy documents, constitution, universities acts, Deed of trust, reports, books on the history and operations of the unorthodox institutions, brochures, and performance management instruments. Prior to the individual interviews I also received some policy documents in electronic format. Document analysis provided a behind-the-scenes look of details that may have been missed during interviews and observations (Patton, 1990). An analysis of the documents combined with interviews and observations while in the field, enabled me to cross-check and validate the findings (Marshall and Rossman, 2016) as well as provided a deeper appreciation of the ownership, governance structure, financing and operations of the case study institutions. Further, a review of policy

documents provided policy positions and context to the neoliberal phenomenon in contemporary higher education.

4.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis took a longer process than anticipated because of challenges encountered during transcription of the interviews and focus group meetings. Individual interviews with senior officials in contemporary higher education in the UK and Australia as well as individual interviews and focus group interviews during the cases studies were all undertaken from November 2014 to September 2015. Data analysis involved transcribing individual interviews and focus group interviews that were captured on tape recorder and downloaded on my laptop and on an external drive for back up. The use of multiple methods of data collection helped me to fully investigate the case and manage the case study database (Yin, 2008). I opened an electronic folder for interviews held in the UK and a separate one for interviews that took place in Australia.

Separate hard files similarly labelled were kept under lock and key at my house and all original copies of participant consent forms and documents received during the field visits (reports, policy documents, financial statements and strategic plans) were kept in these hard copy files. A similar approach was taken for case study institutions. Separate electronic folders were opened and all electronic copies of interviews and focus groups as well as any soft copy documents received were stored in these folders. All hard copy documents and participant consent forms were filed in separate folders opened for each institution and a unique numerical code was assigned to each folder for ease of retrieval. These were kept under lock and key at my house.

I began the process of transcribing the interviews immediately following the first case study in November 2014, but as the number increased, transcribing the data took longer than anticipated and was completed in approximately three months. The process proved challenging and tedious particularly in the case where the mother tongue of some participants was not English and the tape had to be replayed several times to understand what was being articulated. I took a decision to transcribe all interviews where the mother tongue was not English and paid to get the others done professionally to save me the time.

My previous experience as a professional scribe at large meetings as well as my interaction with persons from different cultures, provided me with little difficulty in understanding those participants whose mother tongue was not English hence the decision to undertake to transcribe these interviews myself. A total of 46 interviews and 5 focus group interviews were transcribed. These were all number coded and saved electronically in the respective institution file for example, transcript 005, transcript 006 etc. I edited each interview/focus group transcription that I had paid to get done against the actual tape recording for accuracy, replaying the tape recorder more than once and going through each transcript line by line.

My original intention was to use Nvivo software to help in organising the large volume of data that I had collected from interviews with officials among contemporary HE as well as from the four case study institutions. However I took the decision to analyse the transcripts manually using a thematic approach having received from respondents much more pertinent information than was anticipated using the pre-designed Interview

Protocol (See Table 4.2). I began the analysis of individual interviews with personnel in contemporary orthodox higher education institutions first.

The data analysis followed an inductive and iterative process. I read and re-read each transcript line by line several times, identifying and documenting recurring patterns and themes in the data that would describe the phenomenon. For example, in keeping with the purpose of the study I developed an electronic matrix first looking for description of themes around the main elements of the research such as student ownership, governance, financing, organisational structure, access, pedagogy and documented direct quotes by participants in relation to those broad themes. As I went through each transcript, more themes and patterns began to emerge.

For direct quotations of individual interviews contained throughout Chapter 5, I used the words "senior executive" to refer to the head of the organisation/institution while "senior official" refers to a high ranking individual within the organisation/institution. I also used a number coding system to identify each respondent in the individual interviews. For example #119, #122, and #123. The number coding is the same number as captured on the tape recorder and which is synonymous with the identifier of each interview transcript. Australia or the UK where applicable, is also included in direct quotations for simplicity. The exact month and year in which individual interviews were held also follows direct quotations to facilitate the reader's understanding yet they do not in any way compromise the identity of respondents. For the case study institutions, I performed within-case analysis (Jones, Torres and Arminio, 2014) by examining each of the four cases individually and proceeded to make sense of the data by looking for

convergences and divergences, identifying overall themes and patterns line by line in the transcript with colour coding (See Figure 4.1).

All transcripts were analysed in conjunction with documents received by participants while in the field. During this analysis phase I had to revisit the research questions to reflect the themes and patterns that were emerging. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the 'keyness' of a theme is dependent on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question (p. 87). Therefore in my research

Figure 4.1 Sample of a Within-Case, Line by Line Thematic Coding

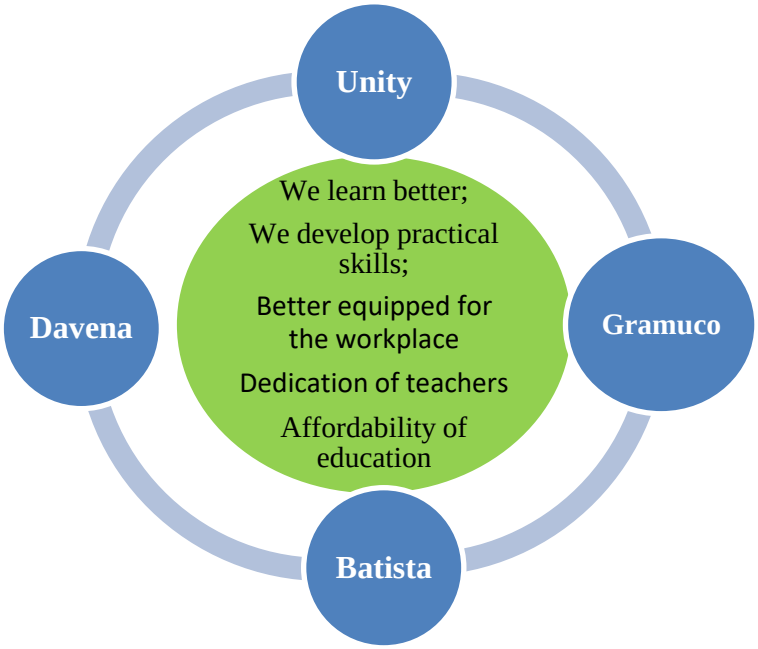
BATISTA COLLEGE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS – 9

INTERVIEWER: Good. So we have a diverse background of students here. So my question is what motivated you to come to Batista. Anybody could start off.
RESPONDENT 1: I would say, so I guess when I was looking at Colleges money was probably one of my top issues. I come from a background where it would be hard for me to attend like a big College, like Michigan State University was one of the Colleges that I was looking at, because they're a very good education school, but they also do not, I would be in debt if I went there. So when I was looking at Batista, it was kind of the financial thing, but I also like the idea of the small class sizes and being able to kind of get to know all the students and the professors that are here and so that was obviously another aspect that kind of drew me towards Batista. My sister actually attended Batista so I'd already kind of known about it from there and so it was kind of like the small class sizes and just the academics that Batista have brought and mixed with the fact that I am not paying a lot each semester and then I wasn't going to go into debt and how should I pay it off, 'cause being an education major, I am not going to be making like loads of money. So just that idea that I am not going to have to worry about paying off the debt is also great, but I do also love the labor programme and the fact that they are helping prepare us for the future by working the job and figuring out how to balance your academics and your social life in having the labour and just the whole balance of Batista and the way that they balanced it is kind of what drew me Batista,
INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much; anybody else?
RESPONDENT 2: For me it wasn't so much about the financial situation. I don't come from a family with a lot of money, but I did very well in High School and I was getting money more from universities together. I came and saw the campus and you know I saw other campuses and I just, I fell in love with the way that it feels here. The kind of people they keep here on this campus. The professors and just the feeling of the campus that kind of closeness of community that was something that was really important to me and that is a big decision why I came to Batista.

I captured through my conceptual lenses, elements of what students counted as important to their pedagogy and learning experiences (See Figure 4.2) to assist in the

development of key themes. However this is just a tip of the iceberg and not an exhaustive list as other themes and patterns around students in democratic governance, student ownership, students' in organisational structure were identified.

Figure 4.2 Sample of common themes arising from focus group interviews among the Case-Studies



I then proceeded to decode/interpret what was revealed in the data to derive sensible meaning to help inform the development of heterodox forms of higher education institutional forms of ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure. Following this, I looked for convergences and divergences in the four cases-studies and proceeded to condense, organise and conceptualise the data in a manner that overall themes and patterns would become intelligible (Patton, 1990).

In so doing I grouped and organised the data that had similar patterns in a matrix format (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). The purpose of this approach was to provide a

comprehensive representation and appreciation of the research problem because of the use of multiple sites in this study (Merriam, 2009). The data analysis led me to a clear explication and understanding of the cases being studied (Merriam, 2009).

In other words, in analysing and interpreting the data it was not just the experiences of participants and my own experiences that shaped my thinking, but I made connections with the wider literature, with the key ideas that were framing my study. The data was iterative in that sense between the participants perspective, my exercising of self-reflexivity and my own interpretation that I brought to the analysis process which were always connected to the wider literature to address the research questions.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

The conduct of this qualitative inquiry as in all qualitative research, involved close interaction between me as the researcher and those being researched. As an 'outsider' to the participants (Weis and Fine, 2000), this level of human relationship invariably raises a number of ethical issues at every step in the research process (Jones, Torres and Arminio, 2014). Ethical principles guide the moral behaviour of the researcher in deciding on the best courses of action to follow that will protect the rights of participants and safeguard them against extreme harm or exposure to risks, as a result of their participation in the research (Kaiser, 2009; Miles and Hubberman, 1994). These ethical considerations remained foremost in my mind as I proceeded to follow deontological ethics [15] (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2008) that is, my moral duty as the researcher to act in

[15] a set of principles that guide the ethical conduct of research

the best interest of participants to the research being mindful of the consequentialism[16] in the conduct of this social research inquiry (Tim, 2011).

I complied with the UK Data Protection Act (1998) and the University of Roehampton Data Protection Policy 2012. I also observed the Social Research Association, Ethical Guidelines 2003. The main ethical issues that were predicted during the conduct of my research were those pertaining to (i) participant consent to be a subject of the study; (ii) confidentiality of information shared and protection of the identity of subjects of the inquiry so as not to cause them embarrassment or harm; (iii) my own responsibility during the research process and ensuring the accurate representation of information captured during the inquiry. The steps taken to address these ethical issues and mitigate possible risks are discussed below:

(i) Informed Consent

As mentioned previously, I made initial telephone contact with individuals of interest and with the site where case-studies would be conducted to solicit their commitment to participate in the study (Creswell, 2013). This was followed up officially in writing to all executives targeted for individual interviews and heads of unorthodox case-study institutions, informing them about the purpose of my research and seeking their informed consent for an individual interview or a case-study of the institution where this applied. Establishing a relationship with targeted participants very early in the research process was necessary for me to create an environment that would enable me

[16] The situation in which researchers are likely to find themselves and the consequences of their actions

to ethically acquire the requisite data and information to validly address my research questions (Maxwell, 1996).

I proposed dates and times and provided guidance that each session should last about one hour. Participants were informed that the data being collected was specific to my research and I would be bound by any ethical issues. They were also advised that they would be required to sign a participant consent form, if they voluntarily agreed to take part in the study. In the letter, I sought an interview with senior management and the finance personnel to gain an overview of the institution, to discuss issues of ownership, the culture and values, governance arrangements, the structure and how the institution sustains itself.

I also asked for a focus group meeting with students which would involve me interviewing them to understand their learning experiences and to get responses to questions around the curriculum, access to the institution, other questions around their overall teaching and learning experiences with the aim of providing an opportunity for feedback from students on my proposed heterodox higher education institutional forms. These issues would enable me to develop an appropriate set of resources for a heterodox model that could be adapted and adopted in country context. A draft agenda of my planned field visit (including the role that each participant was expected to play, documents to examine, etc.) was attached to the letter. Most importantly, I left it to the organisers to finalise the agenda as they saw fit. I subsequently received an official confirmation from all case-study institutions with a very detailed agenda for the period of my stay. Only one institution did not submit a revised agenda but went along with what I had submitted.

In compliance with the University of Roehampton ethical guidelines, an informed consent form was prepared for each method of data collection (interview, focus group, case-study and observation of students in classroom settings) where ethical issues were likely to emerge. On the day of my first face-to-face contact with all participants and institutions, each participant was handed a copy of the participant consent form to read and subsequently sign prior to commencement of any activity. With regard to case-study institutions, a statement of informed consent was signed by the head/representative of each institution as an indication of their permission to undertake the case-study.

(ii) Confidentiality and Anonymity

Protecting participants' right to privacy is central to the conduct of research and one that I took seriously during my field work. In the official correspondence sent out to participants it was clearly expressed that strict observance of confidentiality of information would be maintained. I also gave participants the assurance that all possible steps would be taken to safeguard their identity and that of the institution. The statement of informed consent mentioned above was one way in which I sought to operationalize my intent to respect the privacy of participants by ensuring that consent forms were understood and signed by each participant before engaging in the research process (Jones, Torres and Arminio, 2014). I used a number coding system in the transcripts to maintain the anonymity of all participants (Christians, 2000) and to protect the confidentiality of information. I used pseudonyms for actual case-study institutions.

I retained the period and number of days in which the research activity was conducted since this posed no threat to the integrity of information or in any way compromised the identity of participants. The geographical areas where case-studies were carried out have been referred to by use of a wider continental area to protect the identity of institutions. While some participants had no objection if they or their institution were identified in the final report, from an ethical standpoint I chose not to compromise the confidentiality of information or anonymity of participants (Sanchez-Jankowski in May, 2002).

Transcripts of all audio tapes were stored on my laptop and an external drive and kept safely under lock and key at my house. Because of the volume of interviews I personally transcribed those that were most sensitive and paid to have the others done professionally. Before engaging transcription services I solicited their commitment to treat the information with a high level of confidentiality and to destroy all copies in their possession upon completion of the job. Upon receipt of final payment, I again made contact in writing to verify that all hard and soft copy files were discarded. While I have taken all necessary precaution to anonymise or respect the confidentiality of participants, the small number of unorthodox higher education institutions internationally from among the social economy may not always guarantee full protection.

(iii) Responsibility and Representation

Responsibility involves consideration for the consequences of a researcher's actions upon others and establishing clear lines of accountability to redress any grievance (UK

SRA, 2003). This could not be more important than during the process of transcribing the large volume of data collected. The audio tape of individual interviews and focus groups were transcribed verbatim being careful to capture the exact words of participants in the final report to avoid misrepresentation of facts, deception, or any harm to participants (Jones, Torres and Arminio, 2014). I also personally did a cross-check of all transcripts that I had contracted out against the tape recording machine more than once, to ensure that they accurately reflected the views of participants. This measure served to ensure that I was upholding the social contract between me and those being researched and avoided the slightest impression that participants had been exploited for my own professional advancement (Kaiser, 2009).

4.11 Validity, Reliability and Reflexivity

Ensuring the credibility of research findings is crucial to qualitative research and I followed three of Creswell's (2003) eight validation strategies[17] namely 'Triangulation', 'Clarifying Researcher's Bias', and 'Peer Review' to ensure the trustworthiness of this research inquiry. I used a multi-method approach involving interviews, focus group, observation and document analysis across the four case-study institutions to corroborate statements made (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln and Guba, 2000) and to triangulate information. Triangulation served to increase the validity and reliability of the data and research findings (Patton, 1990). During the conduct of the fieldwork, particular attention was paid to how participants at each case-study institution responded to open ended questions on their forms of ownership; that

[17] Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field; Triangulation; Rich thick description; Peer review or debriefing; Clarifying researcher's bias; Member checking; Negative case analysis; External audits

is where students had beneficial ownership, I looked for emerging themes on the level of involvement of students and academic staff in governance, the funding mechanism and the composition of the organisational structure.

Clarifying researcher bias was another strategy which I used to elucidate my position because interpretivism suggest that we have a particular view of the world that shapes our understanding and the meaning we give. As a constructionist researcher, it meant that I had to immerse myself in the research process (Patton, 2002) in order to construct knowledge and meaningful interpretation of the social phenomenon (Denzin, 1978 in Golafshani, 2003). While my values and perspectives would inevitably come into play during the research process, particularly in relation to my auto-ethnographic prologue in Chapter 1 of this thesis, I was able to exercise a critical reflexivity about the interpretations I bring, to eliminate any forms of biases or assumptions that may have impacted the inquiry (Merriam, 1988). As mentioned before, this research is sponsored by the European Commission/Marie Curie Initial Training Programme under a special project called UNIKE (Universities in the Knowledge Economy). I was therefore bound by the terms and conditions of the research agreement for my study and the research guidelines of my university as a partner in the UNIKE project. I have avoided any conflict of interest during the conduct of this research.

A draft of my study was prepared early in the research process and at every stage I received peer review from the other PhD students and post doc fellows involved in the UNIKE project as well as constructive feedback from a wider pool of professors and partners involved in the project. The draft of my study and review prepared me to focus solely on collecting the data when I entered the field. Because of this level of

preparation I was able to recognise and to address any form of bias as I conducted my field work and was able to position myself within the research process in order to minimize my own personal influence of the outcomes. Three of the case-study institutions were identified by gatekeepers while the fourth institution was identified by me only through the conduct of online research since I had no prior knowledge of its existence or any personal stake in the institution to bias my decision or influence the interview process in any way. As mentioned earlier, while I gave a broad indication in my official correspondence of the type of participants that I would like to interview personally and in focus groups, the selection was made by each case-study institution. Students were very forthcoming with their responses in the focus groups, speaking openly about any negatives and positives in their educational experience.

I endeavoured to keep detailed notes and tape recordings throughout the performance of this research exercise. Pictures of sites were taken where necessary during the observation phase. I used a tape recording device and my cell phone as back-up, to record every interview and focus group to ensure that there was no loss of information. Recording the sessions over notes also ensured that I did not have to rely too much on note taking which has the potential to introduce errors. Ergo the potential for misinformation in the data was reduced because I had captured the actual voices of participants on tape thus enhancing the reliability and validity of information.

Reflective Thoughts

Ensuring the credibility of research findings is an important factor in qualitative research and reflexivity does not lend itself to be separated from my own experience as

researcher (Pollner, 1991). In fact, my experience working in the regulatory department for a social economy enterprise in Saint Lucia and my subsequent position within a higher education institution in that same country, has positioned me to understand and to appreciate some of the challenges within contemporary higher education. Yet, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) caution researchers to be wary of the desire to justify their own experience. While there is much interest in the topic, I was cautious not to allow emotional attachment to "preclude the open, exploratory attitude that is necessary for good data collection and analysis" (p. 14).

According to Patton (2002), in qualitative research "the researcher is the instrument" (p. 14) and through reflection, I understood my role as a researcher. I embraced my involvement and role within the research process (Golafshani, 2003) while seeking to minimize my own personal influence of the outcomes and possible concerns for participants, by adhering to ethical practices in and off the field. Reflexivity involves making the research process itself a focus of inquiry (Pollner, 1991) and I was able to accomplish this by exercising due diligence and posing open ended questions to each respondent thus allowing for unrestricted and candid discussions. I listened attentively and allowed each participant to fully express himself/herself without rushing them through the questions. I demonstrated genuine interest in participants and my fieldwork, while also ensuring that the questions were tailored to maximize open and honest answers that would limit any biases in participant responses and add value and credibility to the research findings.

4.12 Situating Myself

I have been motivated to undertake this empirical case-study because of several reasons. Firstly, my membership in a cooperative enterprise and years of professional service in the regulatory department for cooperatives, as mentioned earlier, has provided me with a sound understanding of the social and economic values of these enterprises to their members and to the wider community. Secondly, my interest in higher education having worked in a professional capacity in the Ministry of Education and higher education institutions in the Caribbean at a time when education was considered a right and not a privilege. Thirdly, having been the beneficiary of free higher education when it was packaged as a public good and not a private investment, I understand the inequalities in society and the plight of students who must endure a heavy debt burden to gain an education which will ultimately redound to the benefit of the wider society and not just the student.

I am therefore propelled to explore ways in which higher educational institutions might be reconfigured along the lines of social economy enterprises for the benefit of students who have been recast as customers in a contemporary neo-liberalised higher education system. The study is defined within the parameters of students and their educational experiences and is therefore not exhaustive.

4.13 Significance of the Study

The study does have practical significance for education policy in the UK and Australia and I am hopeful that it will have the potential for adaptation and adoption by

countries/regions as a viable option for heterodox HEI forms that could serve as 'resources of hope' to achieve differently constituted educational experiences to the benefit of students. This is even more important now that the UK has decided to exit the European Union - a decision that is likely to have an impact on the status of current and prospective EU and international students seeking to study in the UK. All participating institutions and senior officials interviewed were eager to receive a copy of the dissertation.

The next chapter presents the findings of the 7 individual interviews held with high level officials within orthodox higher education and a senior executive of the apex body of cooperatives - a social economy enterprise.

Chapter 5

The Structure of Contemporary Higher Education and its Implications for Students' Experiences

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings that represent data from individual interviews carried out in the UK and Australia prior to the conduct of the case-studies as well as the wider literature on the topic contained in Chapters 2 and 3. The individual interviews that were conducted with senior executives/officials of two orthodox universities, three umbrella bodies representing universities in the UK and Australia and an apex body representing a social economy enterprise, are separate from those conducted in the case study institutions which will be discussed in the next chapter. The findings from these interviews inform the central aim of the study which is an exploration of heterodox forms of higher education institutions in the context of the intensification of the neoliberal forms in the UK and Australia. The findings are dictated by the overarching research question: How do heterodox higher education institutional forms differ from orthodox university forms in relation to ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure? The subsidiary research questions underpinning this thesis are:

(i) What are the current forms of university ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure in the UK and Australia?

(ii) What are the consequences of these regimes for students' access and experiences?

(iii) What alternative models of ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure might be constituted into new higher education institutional forms and how might these enhance students' experiences?

Interviews were conducted with six senior executives in higher education and in the representative organisations for higher education in the UK and Australia on the basis of their direct involvement and seniority in higher education. An interview was also undertaken with a top official in the international apex body for cooperatives because of the global presence of this organisation in advocating for an enabling environment to help promote and sustain these people-centred, self-supporting enterprises. Follow-up questions were asked as necessary for clarity and to obtain answers to the research questions.

In this chapter I address the subsidiary research questions 1 and 2 based on the findings of the study. Subsidiary research question 3 will be dealt with in the next chapter. The findings will help to determine how the configuration of heterodox forms of higher education institutions could facilitate different educational outcomes for students. I conclude the chapter with a short summary of the findings. In Chapter 6, I present the findings of the case-study institutions. Chapter 5 and 6 provide several quotations in order to capture the views of participants as they speak to the various issues. I now present the findings of interviews with officials in contemporary (orthodox) higher education.

5.2 What are the Current Forms of University Ownership, Governance, Financing and Organisational Structure in UK and Australia Higher Education?

Ownership/Control

A 'public university' is one that has traditionally relied on government funding for its financial support (Meek and Hayden, 2005). The characterisation of these educational institutes as 'public' may have implied a form of state ownership. In continental Europe, most universities are publicly owned and education is free in most continents or students sometimes pay nominal tuition fees in others, unlike the UK and Australia where students pay a high cost to attend the predominantly public higher education institutions. By virtue of the above definition the logical thinking would be that ownership of these institutions resides in the state but it is not a straightforward matter.

Ownership of public higher education institutions in Australia and particularly the UK continues to be a contested subject, as there appears to be much uncertainty around who owns them (Shore and Taitz, 2012; Wright and Greenwood, 2017). The ambiguity of ownership arises not so much because of ownership of the physical assets (some of which were owned by the state governments of both countries) but more a question of who comprises the university, who are the beneficiaries and who has supreme power or the ultimate authority to take strategic decisions on behalf of these institutes. (Shore and Taitz, 2012). There are two issues in question. Firstly, whether the government subsidized public higher education institutions are private for-profits and secondly who owns them. It is anticipated that the findings in this chapter will help elucidate the

ambiguity. The concerns of ownership may be considered against the definition and classification provided by UNESCO/OECD/EUROSTAT (2001) which states that:

> *The term ownership may refer to the ownership of school buildings and site, or alternatively ownership of the institution in the sense of ultimate management control. Only in the latter sense is ownership a relevant concept in classifying institutions (p. 49).*

The introduction of new managerialism in UK and Australia higher education (Deem and Brehony, 2005; Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007) may have heightened concerns of de facto ownership by what is posited as corporate-style senior managers (Marginson and Considine, 2000; Vidovich and Currie, 2011) taking over ultimate control of HEIs. The term 'managerialism' or 'new managerialism' refers to the adoption by public sector organisations of management practices, processes and values usually associated with private sector businesses (Deem, 1998). Theories of managerialist regime has tended towards an ethos of enterprise education (Tolofari, 2005) with an emphasis on internal competition and revenue generating activities (Vidovich, et. al., 2007 cited in King, Marginson and Naidoo, 2011). These practices have been fuelled in more recent times by government HE policies including a sharp decline in state support and calls for greater transparency and efficiency in institutional operations.

There was unanimity among respondents in the UK and Australia that public universities were not government instrumentalities neither were they private sector companies. All respondents seemed to agree that they are autonomous, non-profit registered charities and are public institutions in the sense that they perform a public

function (Hyndman and Jones 2011). A senior official representing universities in Australia pointed to the existence of one fully private university but did not expound on whether it was for profit. In the case of the UK, a senior official representing universities in the UK made reference to two private universities but mentioned that they were still not for profit, indicating that "private does not necessarily mean they are for profit" (Senior official #178, UK, May 2015). The non-profit status provides the assumption that education is a public good (Shaw, 2010) based on the recognition of the indirect and shared benefits. Respondent #178 provided a perspective which seemed to suggest a shift of these "public institutions" away from the public sector umbrella, towards privatisation. According to the senior official:

> *"…they are autonomous institutions; they are not owned by the government. Are they part of the public sector?*
>
> *Well when they were entirely dependent on grant income it was clear they were. Now they are in large parts dependent on fees from a student loans company…." (Senior official #178, UK, May 2015)*

What is clear from the response provided is that UK public HEIs receive the majority of their income from the Student Loans Company (SLC), a privately financed institution. The SLC is a 'non-profit' UK government-owned organisation that provides loans and grants to students (https://www.slc.co.uk/about-us.aspx). According to respondent #178 the SLC operates 'at arm's length from government' and provides loans to students backed by government'. If the response of #178 is accepted then the private financing of HEIs could provide some justification that they may no longer be

considered to be part of the public sector but as private institutions in their own rights even though student loans continue to be backed by public funds. Yet ontologically, the SLC belongs to the government. It means that government is the one issuing loans to students. However, in order to keep student loans off the government balance sheet and thereby reduce the government debt incurred by student loans, the government devised a strategy which would be to sell the loan book to the Student Loans Company (McGettigan, 2012; Wright, 2015).

This then raises a further concern that if the purpose of a registered charitable HEI is the provision of a public collective good, which by definition is non-excludable in ownership (Cemmell, 2002; Ourania and Gareth, 2014), then the notion of higher education as a private good (Hansmann, 1999; Wright, 2015) based on market considerations and linked with the personal benefits of people who want to be educated, (Kocaqi, 2015) is a retrograde step that could promote inequality and exclusion (Burke, 2013; Cemmell, 2002). Government policies as outlined in the UK 2011 White Paper "Students at the Heart of the System" and Higher Education (Dawkins) White Paper 1988 of Australia, may have given legitimacy to the private good debate or privatisation of HE (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009; Ball, 2012) by shifting the burden of funding universities entirely from the government to students who are said to 'benefit most from HE' (BIS, 2011), notwithstanding the positive spillover effects to the wider society (Shaw, 2010).

UNESCO/OECD/EUROSTAT (2001) defines a public institution as: (i) one which is controlled and managed directly by a public education authority/agency or (ii) is controlled and managed either by a government agency directly or by a governing body

(Council, Committee etc.), most of whose members are appointed by a public authority or elected by a public franchise (p. 49). Australia National University Act 1991 (Amended 2014) makes provision for the Council to comprise 15 persons of which 8 are appointed from within the university and 7 external members appointed by the Minister on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee of Council.

Given the definitions of 'ownership' and of 'a public institution' provided by UNESCO/OECD/EUROSTAT above, there is not much evidence to suggest that contemporary HEIs in the UK and Australia are government owned or are they public sector institutions even while they were receiving a significant amount of their financial support from the public purse. To further illuminate the ambiguity surrounding ownership of public HEIs a respondent provided that the institute was a "public university owned by the people and it is for the people" (Senior official #121, Australia, January, 2015). This perspective seem to suggest that the university (which encapsulates the concept of public HEIs and their public good initiative) was created as a collective for the shared interests, values and decisions of stakeholders involving students, academics, researchers, alumni, parents, workers and government, with no specific ownership title claim (Kelsey and Wills 2005; Shore and Taitz, 2012).

Governance and Organisational Structure

If public HEIs are spaces of collective decision-making as stated above, then the governance and institutional configuration of contemporary HEIs can be examined in the context of an understanding of the internal decision-making processes, how are

decisions taken, where do power and authority lie and the ways in which these decisions affect stakeholders with specific reference to students.

Respondents indicated similarities in the governance authority of higher education institutions in Australia and the UK. In both cases the governance authority is referred to as a council, a senate or a board of trustees. This is spelt out in the institution's Establishment Act or Royal Charter. In Australia, the precise rules and requirements for membership and operation of the governing body are set by individual states and territory legislation and differed to some extent between Acts.

In the UK and Australia the governing body is informed and supported by a number of sub committees including the academic senate. The Australia HE Threshold Standards 2011 requires a majority of external members who are independent of universities to comprise the governing body in order to ensure a balance of skills, expertise and gender (S.3, ss.3.2). This provision is similar to that of the UK (UK Higher Education Code of Governance, 2014: 23). As one interviewee noted: "there are people appointed and they will be appointed by their connections to the political flavour of the government at the time" (Senior official, #123, Australia, January 2015). This response is reflective and may imply the potential for politicising the governance body or a conflict of interest (Slaughter, Thomas, Johnson and Barringer, 2014) which could have the likely adverse effect of undermining the principles of institutional autonomy (Henkel, 2005). Alternatively, it could help to bring about diversity on the governance body as a result of networking (Etzkowitz, 2002) while contributing to the strengthening of institutional programmes for the benefit of students.

Respondents were all asked the question: "what is the representation of students in institutional governance and are their voices really heard?" A surprising revelation to the question posed is that respondents differed significantly in their responses involving the extent of student participation in governance processes. On average, two students occupy a seat on the governing body which consists of around 20 persons and this is spelt out in each university's establishment Act as state laws about university governance somewhat differ in Australia.

This respondent provided an interesting construction of students in governance:

> *"…I would be surprised if you find in Australian universities that students have more than a minority say in anything. Part of the difficulty is cultural and so in Australia the students that get involved in politics and that would be conceived as student politics are often radical left I suppose, although if you look at hard right politicians at the moment they have all been through student politics as well but maybe on the outside… those that end up wanting to be on governing bodies in universities are often very left wing and I wonder whether that contributes somehow to universities managing how much of a say students have in managing the organisation" (Senior executive #120, Australia, January 2015)*

Meanwhile, the perspective of this next respondent seemed to indicate that students mattered and they were being engaged:

> *"… I think students have as much say as anyone else and I think that they are heard. We don't have a hostile structure at all. Very detailed briefing papers go to the Board of Trustees…the chancellor is very good at working his way around the table to get views of each individual…a board*

is as good as its members and the behaviour of its members and I think it's a very good board" (Senior official, #122, Australia, January 2015)

The above responses come from diametrically opposed view points and indicate that some institutions may have attempted to demonstrate transparency of policy and decisions more than others by ensuring adequate representation of all stakeholders (Kulati, 2000) and a willingness to bring on board students views (Sabin and Daniels 2001). Yet based on the composition of the hierarchical structure and with so few students occupying a seat on the governing body, this could inadvertently prejudice the opinion of the more senior members while 'marginalising students' views' (Lizzo and Wilson, 2009). In the last few years, Australia had a state law which required that student representatives be included on all university councils or senates. This law was repealed thus creating some controversy according to a respondent. While universities were still free to include student representatives on their councils, removal of the law could suggest the extent to which students are seen as critical partners in governance issues affecting their educational experience and may help to illuminate the views expressed by respondent #120.

The question was posed: what role do you see students playing in the governance of an alternative HEI model?

The following perspective was provided by an interviewee representing social economy enterprises:

"I think if you are serious about it, then students have to be engaged with the governance of the university, you have to have teachers, the ancillary workers, the cleaners, staffing assistance…you need them all engaged in

the governance of the university as well as the parents and community so that you get a much more holistic community feel to the institution… It needs to be fully integrated, carry the support of communities, municipalities and educationalists. I think that is the great value…" (Senior Executive #113, UK, December 2015)

The interviewee's thoughts are consistent with the publications of proponents of alternative universities (e.g. Boden, Ciancanelli and Wright, 2012; Cook, 2013; Neary and Winn, 2017; Wright and Greenwood, 2017; Wright, Greenwood and Boden, 2011) who have argued for a more democratic and collaborative involvement of students and faculty in the governance and control of universities. Clearly respondent #113 appeared to have suggested a more all-embracing form of governance involving different stakeholders within the wider community.

Respondents' views seem to differ that universities were operating like corporations, that they were entrepreneurial or are in business to generate profits. Some of the popular reasons cited for the non-traditional way in which universities now conduct their business operations as gleaned from respondents are:

(i) For value-added; that is generating revenues to support the core operations;

(ii) Universities are not corporations and thus have no mandate to generate profits for shareholders. It's about financing university activities;

(iii) They are forced to run like a business because of the amount of money that goes through their coffers but the money gets ploughed back into the institute consistent with a not-for-profit;

(iv) Encouraging strategic investment thinking in the future of students, their colleagues and in the development of the university;

(v) Some universities are stand-alone foundations which give them opportunity to do slightly different things but they are not for profits.

With an already deregulated UK higher education system (Deem and Hillyard, 2007) and a similar proposal being tabled by the Australian government (Greenaway and Haynes, 2003), universities operate in a competitive global market. They seemed to convey the message that at a time when their traditional funding source was drying up (Clark, 2004), the primary focus of management was the identification of revenue streams to keep these institutes operational. There appeared to be some consensus among respondents with the academic literature mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis that the internationalisation of higher education and the huge inflow of revenue into higher education institutions necessitated that they be 'forced to act like corporate businesses', contradicting some of the earlier interviewees.

The use of terminology such as "commercial international education operation has emerged"; "the amount of money that go through their coffers" and "what universities are managing is different from what it was before" are consistent with trading, competition and market-oriented management practices - an indication that 'new management' intends to convey the message that 'it is not business as usual' in higher education (Bowersox, 2013). Yet the sentiments expressed by respondents that they do not see themselves as corporations but merely survivors in a global economic market has been captured by Healey (2008) who claims that "it has been the internationalisation of the *student* body, rather than the internationalisation of either the faculty or research teaching that gives rise to the perception that universities are beginning to mimic corporations in their orientation" (p. 334).

I also posed the following question: "could you advise on the organisational structure and how involved are students and academics in the institutional structure"? An interesting perspective was provided by one interviewee who mentioned that while he was probably the wrong person to answer this question not being directly inside the universities. However, from his vantage position as representative of some of the leading universities, provided this response:

> *"You would not be surprised to hear that in recent times in Australian universities, elements of academic staff see themselves as resisting a trend towards what they call managerialism and this is not necessarily an Australian thing… From where I sit…thinking about actions that the vice-chancellors resolve to take at board meetings, it seems that there are some real practical limits on the vice-chancellors' power within their institutions… Although universities have changed enormously in the past 25 years here as in other countries, there are still institutions that tend to have a kind of federal structure which some people might see as inefficient, but others would see as protecting cherished values of collegiality and academic freedom…so I think the idea that some academics seem to have that vice-chancellors have become corporate style CEOs is a little bit exaggerated. A lot of things really don't seem to work…" (Senior executive #119, Australia, January 2015)*

Contrary to some scholarly literature (Harman and Treadgold, 2007; Robertson, 2010), this respondent did not support the view that higher education institutions were operating like corporations or their vice-chancellors' as corporate CEOs. The respondent is suggesting that power is complex and that whereas vice-chancellors may appear to occupy very powerful positions, in reality they may not be as powerful as the literature suggests. There are numerous factors and market forces at play (Gumport, 2000) that constrain vice-chancellors and to which they are being made accountable

(Altbach, et. al, 2009). Thus, power dynamics in universities is not as straightforward or simply a case that these institutions have become straightforwardly corporatised or commercialised.

The respondent also mentioned that the exponential increase in student numbers over the past 25 years as a result of the massification[18] of education has led to radical commercial international education operation that warrants parallel changes in institutional governance and management to cope with these developments since what is being managed is different from what it was before.

According to the respondent: "*universities are twice as big, they have large international and potentially global business operations and the bigger universities are now international entities with multi-billion dollar turnovers…" (Senior executive #119, Australia, January 2015)*

Clearly if students have been recast as customers and a substantial proportion of HEIs income is derived from student fees (Moses, 2007; IFS, 2017), then this should necessitate prudent management of these finances. This will ensure that students are receiving a holistic educational experience that will prepare them to venture out into the world with confidence. At least in the case of the UK, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) 2017 report reveals that as much as 93% of UK university income from teaching comes from tuition fees (p. 31). This new revenue stream has been catalysed by the effects of globalisation, massification of education and shrinking global economic

[18] The process of bringing education to a global mass audience or "the rapid increase in student enrolment that was witnessed towards the end of the twentieth century" according to Scott 1995 in Hornsby and Osman, 2014

resources since the 1980s, requiring governments to introduce policies to streamline the operations of HEIs, in keeping with much broader public institutional reforms (Moses, 2007).

Following on from interviewee #119's response, institutional autonomy and academic freedom continue to shape important discourses. Institutional autonomy conveys the meaning that the research and teaching of academic institutions must be morally and intellectually independent, and free from all external influences and direction whether political or economic (Hägg 2009:3; Moses, 2007). In other words as academic institutions they must be free to run their own affairs (Anderson and Johnson, 1998) even as massification of education continue to pose significant challenges. Proponents of institutional autonomy and academic freedom argue that external pressure from the knowledge economy for knowledge workers, and knowledge generation (Willmott, 2003) are redefining the roles and scope of universities and in the process, threatens institutional autonomy and by extension academic freedom (Hägg 2009). These values and 'federal structures', which according to respondent#119, "some people might see as inefficient, but others would seek to protect".

The question was posed: "would you say that government is steering your institution from a distance or do you have full autonomy?" This question was important in the context of this dissertation because of the discourses which suggest that academics have lost their freedom and control over their teaching and research as well as their time, in terms of what problems to study and what methods to use and to publish results (Ball, 2012). This is as performance measurement tools, accountability and the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Research Assessment Exercises (RAE) are

introduced in higher education (Altbach, et. al, 2009; Hägg 2009:93). It means that as academics continue to feel a sense of disempowerment and a growing sense of ontological insecurity, as well as a loss of a sense of meaning in what they do and of what is important in what they do (Ball, 2012) this could adversely impact on students' experience in terms of the quality of the pedagogy and what it is that they learn. The interviewees' accounts challenged some of the claims made by Altbach, et al, Hägg and Ball as outlined above. For example, according to the following Australian senior official:

> *"We have complete autonomy… I have been in universities for my whole working life and I think they've got an enormous amount of independence. We set the curriculum, we set the academic standards, we set the research agenda…we will be working towards supporting the government's scientific priorities because of the research funding and the research collaborations that it creates, but we also have our own research agenda. We have four research themes that cut across the university that we needn't ask anyone's permission to add" (Senior official #122, Australia, January 2015)*

A UK senior official provided a similar perspective which seem to suggest that research was not being dictated by government policies and that universities had full autonomy in the area of research.

> *"…we have a system in the UK of research councils operating at arm's length from the government. So, the research council agenda is not determined by government in large part and the allocation of funding from the research councils is determined by the perceived value of the bids – the applications. We've just been through the research excellence framework, the REF and research was rated and that's the key criteria. So*

> *… the REF outlines how research funding is allocated and the processes at work there and the degree of separation from government policy which is quite substantial…" (Senior official #178, U.K., May 2015)*

The above responses provide useful insight into the discourse on institutional autonomy and academic freedom. The findings reveal that universities have had and continue to enjoy substantial autonomy (Deem, Hillyard and Reed, 2007; Marginson and Considine, 2000). University autonomy and academic freedom were recently put into practice when vice chancellors in the U.K. raised serious objections and refused to accede to an official request from Conservative MP and government whip Chris Heaton-Harris. The MP sought to obtain the names of professors lecturing on Brexit along with copies of their syllabus and links to online lectures (The Guardian, dated 24 October 2017).

Notwithstanding the above, the introduction of new managerialism to support governments with their policies of a more transparent, efficient and effective higher education system (Moses, 2007) may appear to have created structural changes and challenges to academic work and identity, raising concerns that 'the professoriate has lost much of its autonomy' (Altbach et. al, 2009:93). In every jurisdiction governments have priority areas to which they look to universities for support of these research priorities (Meek and Suwanwela, 2006; Mohrman, Ma and Baker, 2008) which is consistent with the position taken by respondent #122. It is important to recall that up to the 1980s, it may be argued that academics enjoyed a degree of collegial governance, which was alluded to by respondent #119 above. This means they were traditionally governed, controlled and organised by a committee of their peers (scholars) elected as primus inter pares (Sahlin and Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016), thus

power of dominance and authority resided with them (Altbach et. al, 2009) and there was no outside threat to their academic freedom and how they organised and managed the institution. However, collegial governance was not without its own set of problems which is claimed, involved exclusion as well as an elite male hegemonic group (Rowlands, 2015), and according to Moodie and Eustace (1974), "traditional governance did not involve decision-making by consensus or embrace the whole community of scholars" (in Rowlands 2015:1029)

The irony is that in some instances, administrators and chief executive officers who were at one time part of academia have become strategic business managers (OECD, 2007) with responsibility for taking difficult decisions (Bean, 2015) and have introduced systems of control and management tools directed at the enhancement of productivity and performativity of staff (Ball, 2012). These management tools are used both at the level of the organisation and at the level of employees to assess whether the institution is fulfilling its objectives and to endeavour to align workers performance to organisational goals (Carter, Day and Klein, 1995). Critics argue that there could be difficulties in applying these metrics to teaching as they are too prescriptive and could suppress the emancipatory approach to teaching and learning (Cave, Hanney, Henkel and Kogan, 1997).

It should be clarified that not all universities have transformed into what is perceived as the neoliberal CEO style of leadership (Marginson, 2013; Peters, 2013) as Cambridge and Oxford continue in the practice of their collegial governance tradition (Rowlands, 2017; Tapper and Salter 1992). These institutional changes that have taken place in response to external pressures may have resulted in deep rooted tensions and

suspicions (McInnis, 1998; Shin and Jung, 2014; Winter, Taylor and Sarros, 2000) between management who formulate policies and implement reforms, and academics who put up resistance while seeking to safeguard collegiality (Gumport, 2000; Marini and Reale, 2016). As explained by this respondent, collegiality may have become a relic and no longer deemed to be the solution for dealing with the strategic decisions and challenges of contemporary higher education leaving the professoriate to carry out the long established teaching and academic research functions (Williams and Kitaev, 2005).

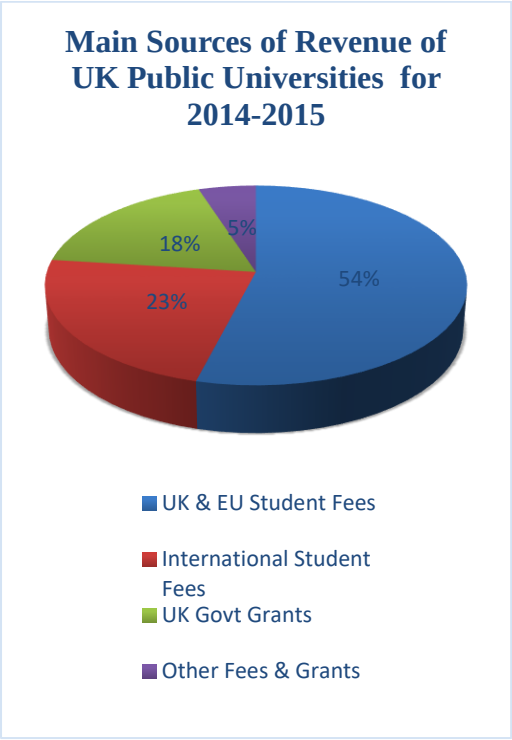
> *"…in a model university, there is a huge amount of investment going on that need some independent critical assessment and often not necessarily an academic one…there are people there that are either partners in senior banking or consulting firms right through to the chancellor who…also had a distinguished career in academia and government. So, it's a good mix particularly made independent without any academic in-fighting playing out on the board of trustees" (Senior executive #121, Australia, January 2015)*

It is significant to note that institutional autonomy from direct political control does not mean immunity from public accountability (Majone, 1999 in Christensen and Lægreid, 2006:29). Neither should it denote the absence of systems and processes that are essential ingredients for the effective and efficient operation of any organisation/institution and for monitoring performance against plans (Altbach, et. al, 2009). Yet a participatory approach to governance and institutional decision-making involving key actors (students, academics and workers) should make for more effective organisations.

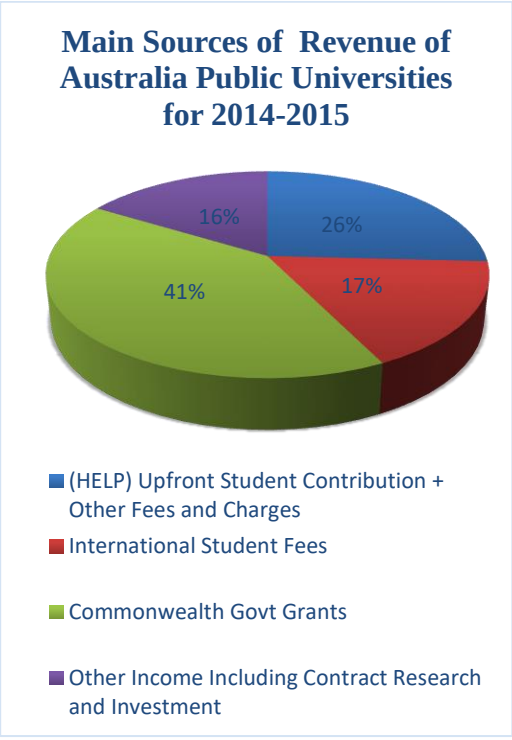
Financing of Higher Education in the UK and Australia

Respondents were asked the following question: "How do universities finance their operations?" Higher education institutions in the UK and Australia generate revenue from a variety of different sources with variation among the types of institutions, but the three main categories mentioned by respondents were: domestic student fees; international student fees; and contribution towards teaching and research by government, though on a much more reduced scale than previously, having now passed on most of the funding of universities to students in the form of increased tuition fees (Wright, 2015). Student fees contributed 77% of total UK university revenue in 2014/2015 while for Australia this was 43% for the same period (See Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Sources of Funding of UK and Australia Universities in 2014/2015



Source: Universities UK – 2016



Source: Universities Australia - 2015

The biggest exposure to government as deduced from the findings of the research was the backing of loans through the Student Loan Company (SLC), UK and Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), Australia, which could adversely affect the Treasury in the event that students were unable to repay their loans (Wright, 2015) but which could also save governments millions in subsidies if students repaid all of their outstanding debts. All respondents except one, declared that the international export market was very important for the sustenance of higher education institutions in an era of declining public subsidies (Healey, 2008). The other university appeared to have placed greater emphasis on the development of its local community through education as a community-based institution. According to a respondent: "*... one of the distinguishing features and potential vulnerabilities of the financing of the Australian university system is how reliant we are on international student fees…" (Senior executive #119, Australia, January 2015).* Another respondent saw international students as "the choice". According to the respondent:

> *"... there are not too many alternative sources of income and you are competing in an international market you cannot just cut off your international students' fees; that's price elasticity…" (Senior official #123, January, Australia, 2015)*

The concept of price elasticity in the context of HE suggests a relationship between the change in demand for higher education (the product) and a corresponding change in price (tuition fees). This economic concept has become a feature in contemporary HE since the constriction of state funding, resulting in increased competition among universities to identify alternative sources of income (Slaughter, Thomas, Johnson and Barringer, 2014).

Since 2014, the government of Australia has taken steps to deregulate the higher education sector. Concerns over deregulation of tuition fees in Australia featured prominently among interviewees because of uncertainties surrounding future public investment in higher education institutions (Times Higher Education, dated 17 March 2015). Deregulation meant opening up the HE sector to free market competition and the introduction of maximum tuition fees, as well as a 20 per cent cut to the public subsidy of tuition costs (Norton, 2014), similar to what already obtains in the UK.

There were mixed feelings among respondents about fee deregulation. Some were concerned about the effect on equality and access (Canton and Vossensteyn, 2001) as well as on students' debts (Kniest 2014), at the local level at least, while others viewed it as an opportunity to develop the export market which has become a lucrative investment for HEIs (Gray, Shyan Fam, and Llanes, 2003). According to the next respondent: "f*ee deregulation is something that my organisation has advocated very strongly in favour of for many years… because we believe that the current funding system doesn't work anymore… mainly because of the number of students that are in the system now, particularly since the previous government in 2012 deregulated the number of places*…" (*Senior executive #119, Australia, January 2015*). Deregulation would also allow HEIs to set their own tuition fees both in terms of international students and home-based students while government relaxes its hold on the sector (Canton and Vossensteyn, 2001). Such was the position taken by the next respondent:

> *"if the Commonwealth changes the way it funds universities, which it's just in the process of saying they are going to take 20 per cent off student funded loans, that causes enormous risks, but at the same time, we think it creates*

opportunity, because we can, if we get stuck, if the proposals of this current government goes through the Senate…we are in a deregulated fee environment, so we can charge the fees we want to charge based on demand for our courses and it's not a bad thing" (Senior executive #122, Australia, January 2015)

A major driver of the global transformation in higher education (Altbach, 2016) is the mass movement of students, as alluded to by respondent #119 above because it has heightened demand for school places leading to an equally sharp increase in tuition fees (McGettigan, 2013). The number of students enrolled in higher education globally has continued on an upward trajectory from 99.4 million in 2000 with a projection of 414.2 million in 2030 (Calderon, 2012:1) compounding the pressure on already scare financial resources. Such prediction in international student numbers could only serve to perpetuate the spike in tuition fees in an unregulated international students market consistent with the position taken by respondent #122 above.

All respondents agreed that international students have contributed significantly to HE and thus to the national economies of the UK and Australia. According to a respondent, "*across the whole sector 17% of university income comes from international student fees. That's an average across all universities but for some universities it's a third of their income so that's an area that Australia universities have done very well to internationalise …" (Senior executive #119, Australia, January 2015).* In the case of just one elite university, international students contributed approximately $400 million a year in tuition fees alone which amounts to 22% of that institute's aggregate income of $1.8 billion in 2014 (Senior official #123, Australia, January 2015). International

students also comprised approximately 25% of that institute's total student population while half originated from China. Meanwhile, the proportion of international students in Australian universities varied between 20 and 25 per cent with a total of 1.25 million students of which about 400,000 were international students (Senior executive #120, Australia, January 2015).

According to Universities Australia statistics (2017), international students added a record $21.8b to the local economy in 2016 up from $17.5b in 2014 (Universities Australia, 2017) and the country welcomed a total of 480,092 international students in its higher education institutions[19]. Of the $21.8b, international education contributed approximately 67% (Universities Australia, 2017). In the case of the UK, a respondent admitted that he did not have these figures at his fingertips but mentioned that "the total contribution of international students to the local economy was in the order of £7 billion" (Senior executive #178, U.K., May 2015). However, based on the results of research recently undertaken by Oxford Economics, international students contributed more than £25.8 billion to the UK economy during the period 2014-2015 up from £7 billion in 2012-2013 (Universities UK, 2017) generating an estimated 137,000 full-time equivalent academic jobs (In Focus: Universities UK 2014, p. 1). Spending by international students also supported 206,600 jobs across the UK in 2014-2015 up from an estimated 137,000 full-time equivalent jobs (In Focus: Universities UK, 2014, p. 1). In tax revenue contribution alone, international students contributed £1 billion in 2014-2015 equivalent to the salaries of 31,500 nurses. A total of 437,000 international

[19]https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/Media-and-Events/media-releases/Australia-s-international-student-numbers-continue-to-grow#.WfYkLGaDPIU

students were registered at higher education institutions in the UK in 2014-2015 representing 19% of the aggregate student population[20].

The above statistics cannot be understated and means that international students are essential contributors to the growth of the national economies of the UK and Australia as well as the HE system. The UK has in recent times imposed strict immigration rules on international students, but these policies could only serve to restrict access, discourage students and cause them to turn to more attractive destinations to pursue their studies (Scott, 2017; Walker, 2014). In January 2017 UCAS revealed a 7% decline in demand for UK higher education by EU students compared to the same time in the previous year (www.UCAS.com). The number of international applicants remained unchanged suggesting that the UK is already becoming a less attractive destination to students (Scott, 2017) who now have the option to invest their money elsewhere to enjoy the benefits of an enhanced educational experience.

5.3 What are the Consequences of these Regimes for Students' Access and Educational Experiences?

Access to Higher Education

There was consensus among interviewees that access to higher education in the UK and Australia has increased among marginalised students. As one respondent put it:

[20]http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/news/Pages/International-students-now-worth-25-billion-to-UK-economy---new-research.aspx

> *"It's easier now for marginalised students than it was, but it's still a lot easier for people from affluent backgrounds to get into university and to get into the best universities … It's not about fees because they are deferred through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) …the bigger issue is differential access to quality schooling…while demand driven funding has had some good results for equity in higher education the same sort of imbalance in socio-economic backgrounds is still there in the most prestigious courses and the most prestigious universities"* (Senior executive #119, Australia, January, 2015)

The perspective of the respondent is consistent with the discourses which suggest that students from low socio-economic backgrounds are under-represented and access to HE continues to be the privilege of the middle classes in society (Altbach, et al., 2009; Naidoo, 2003) while the number of young people globally from working class groups attending HE has remained low (Archer, Hutchings and Ross, 2005; Devlin, 2013).

In Australia, the findings of the research revealed an increase in the number of low socio-economic status (SES) undergraduates by 38% from 90,400 to 125,000 between 2008 and 2013 (Senior Executive #120, Australia, January 2015) even while the literature reflected that participation among that same social group remained at approximately 15% in the last 15 years (Devlin, 2013: 939). SES for higher education purposes in Australia was not measured at an individual level but it is geographically based, measured by an area variable which used to be by postcodes. In the UK there was a widening of the gap in opportunity on some measures between different social classes even though the chances of entry and absolute numbers may have improved for low income families (Naidoo, 2003).

The Department for Business Information and Skills (BIS) reported that 'fewer than one in five young people from the most disadvantaged areas enter higher education compared to more than one in two for the most advantaged areas' (BIS, 2011:55:5.6). Additionally, the Office For Fair Access (OFFA) in a 2015 report revealed that eighteen year-olds from the most advantaged backgrounds were 2.5 times more likely to gain access to higher education than disadvantaged 18 year olds, and seven times more likely to enter one of the more prestigious universities (UCAS End of Cycle Report, 2015). This is despite a report from UCAS that the entry rates to higher education for 18 year-olds from the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods of England increased by 65 per cent since 2006 to reach 18.5 per cent in 2015. The participation rate of disadvantaged young people at institutions requiring higher entry tariffs also remained almost flat over recent years' (BIS, 2011).

These statistics raise concerns around the discourse about 'processes of exclusion and 'relations of power and difference in higher education fields' (Burke, 2012: 40) also highlighted by respondent #119, and which is embedded in a highly stratified educational system that prejudices one class of students over others. Political power is also an important factor within the discourse of HE as it has an 'inadvertent' tendency to nurture the injustices in an imbalanced social structure. In her book "The Right to Higher Education: Beyond widening participation", Burke (2012) argues that a framework for dealing with issues of social justice includes 'a politics of redistribution which ensures that all students have equal access to educational resources such as books and lecture materials, as well as clear advice, information and guidance, regardless of their background' (p. 39). This argument could be advanced a step further to include the necessity for a framework which will ensure that all marginalised students receive

the right to free-tuition access in all 'public' HE institutions. This is one way in which policy-makers could seek to bridge the imbalances in society and guarantee the pathway to economic development.

Notwithstanding the findings of the research, it is worth noting that as tuition fees reached their current peak of £9,000 in 2012, the Department for Business Information and Skills reported a reversal in the participation rate from 49% in 2011/2012 to 47% in 2013/2014 in response to the change in student fees (BIS, 2015). This trend suggests a direct correlation between costs of HE and access which significantly differs from the view point of respondent #119 above which suggests that contingency-based tuition fees was not a factor hindering the accessibility of more marginalised students to HE. The microeconomic theory of demand and supply indicates that as price of a product increase, there is a corresponding decrease in demand for the product (Gölpek, 2012) and the converse is true suggesting that students from low socio-economic backgrounds were more debt averse (Callender and Jackson, 2005).

Demand for higher education by students is driven by the expectation that their overall costs will be minimized and that their return on investments in the future will be maximized (Gölpek, 2012), a theory that has been advanced by policy-makers and which came up during the interviews since most respondents supported the tuition fee increase in the UK and Australia citing income contingency loans as an education policy that does not seem to disadvantage students. A much bigger issue to respondents was the increase in the national debt that was likely to occur as a direct consequence of student loans. As one interviewee suggested:

> "*… under an income contingency system those people don't pay anything at the point of study so it's not a problem for them… the other thing that we have pointed out here in the past 12 months … is that graduate students stood pretty well, to benefit at their higher education … so an increase of a few thousand dollars in fees has to be put in the context of the lifetime return…I guess at higher levels of participation it may become or may come to be seen as a problem for the national budget if there is a big and growing doubtful debt…"* (Senior executive #119, Australia, January 2015)

According to statistics from the Student Loans Company, outstanding debt on student loans in the UK stood at £100.5bn in March 2017, representing a 16.6% increase in the national debt from the previous year's figure of £86.2bn. England alone accounted for 89% of the outstanding debt in 2017 (Monaghan and Weale, 2017). In the case of Australia, the contribution of higher education funding (Higher Education Loan Programme or HELP) to the national debt for 2016–17 financial year was $54.0 billion (approx. £30b), $9.3 billion above the estimated $44.7 billion in the national budget (Ferguson, 2018). These figures are consistent with the concerns expressed by respondent #119 but even more concerning is that the burden of financing higher education has been shifted to students.

The income contingency loans debate is already addressed in this section but there are two other issues raised in the quotation above: One is that 'students do no repay their loans while they are studying'. However, it is important to recognise that the abolition of the means-tested maintenance grants to students in the UK and its replacement with maintenance loans in 2016-17 means that students from poorer backgrounds graduate with more debts than students from higher socio-economic backgrounds according to a 2017 Institute for Fiscal Studies [IFS] report (Belfield, Britton, Dearden and van der

Erve, 2017:32). Students from poorer backgrounds worry about their finances and the prospect of having to repay their student debts plus accumulated interest at some future date (James, Bexley, Devlin and Marginson, 2007) while universities appeared to be concerned about the prospect of extracting more money from students for their survival. Such was the position of a respondent:

> *"… we didn't support and would not support a decrease in the loans and tuition fees charged. …. one being, there was no assurance that the difference would be made up, so it would put universities in a very vulnerable financial position if suddenly a third of their income was at risk…" (*Senior executive #178, U.K., May 2015)

The second issue raised by respondent #119 above, is that 'graduate students stood pretty well to benefit from their higher education'. The interviewee's response supports the theory that higher education is now being promoted as a private good that would equip students to create the higher incomes for themselves (Newfield, 2008). However this theory clearly demonstrates that contemporary HEIs have been 'selling dreams to students', who finance their studies by incurring substantial debts while many may not be able to find suitable employment upon graduation (Norton, 2016). According to Norton (2016), the proportion of graduates getting highly-skilled jobs in Australia was down only slightly over time. As already indicated in Chapter 2, an average of 16 per cent of young people under the age of 24 were under-employed in Australia in 2014 (Rayner, 2016). A research by the National Institute of Labour Studies at Flinders University also revealed a drop of 14% in the proportion of new university graduates in full-time employment from 56.4 per cent in 2008 to 41.7 per cent in 2014 (Lamacraft, 2016). Australia is said to have one of the highest level of part-time work anywhere in the OECD (Patty, 2017).

In the UK, government figures for 2016 revealed a 2.2% drop in the number of 21-30 year old graduates in skilled work compared to 2015 (Yorke, 2017). It has been reported that about one-in-five graduates were in low or medium skilled jobs on average across the whole of the working population (Yorke, 2017). Additionally, a YouGov 2016 survey revealed that 39% of university graduates indicated that finding a job poses significant stress and anxiety (Aronin and Smith, 2016). In 2016 over 50,000 graduates were in non-graduate jobs in the UK and according to HESA statistics data, approximately 10,000 graduates were employed as retail assistants, farm workers, security guards and secretaries just anything to get employment (Pells, 2016). These figures seem to suggest that students are not being adequately prepared for a future beyond higher education and according to the chairman of the Education Endowment Foundation, universities should do more to prepare students for employment (Pells, 2016).

The UK Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) End of Cycle Report 2016, further disputes the findings in this research that tuition fees has no bearing on access. The report revealed that the number of acceptances from non-EU countries in the 2016 academic year fell by 2.3% to 38,300 for the first time since 2011, due to a decrease in the number of applicants by 1.9 per cent to 74,300 in 2016 (p. 16) even while the report revealed a 1% marginal increase for the most disadvantaged group in 2016 to 19.5% compared to the previous year's 18.5%. This clearly suggest that for many students cost continues to be an enormous barrier to access, affecting some social sectors more than others (Altbach, et al., 2009).

A respondent mentioned that when the fee increase went from £3,000 to £6,000 to £9,000, the group that was least affected was applicants from the most disadvantaged communities. According to the respondent:

> *"… you might suppose that with an increase in fees, and therefore an increase in loans, the applicants to university who would be most worried about that, would be the ones from disadvantaged backgrounds. That is, with less economic power. Not the case... So, we now are in a position where the growth in applications from disadvantaged backgrounds is more substantial than ones from more affluent backgrounds. So, it didn't actually hit the disadvantaged, potential students in the way that one might have supposed... They recognized that this was a loan and you didn't have to pay anything back until you were a good earning graduate…if you were earning £21,000 or more. So, it didn't have the negative effect you might have imagined" (Senior official #178, U.K., May 2015)*

There is not much documented evidence in the literature to refute the respondent's claim that "many more students from low socio-economic status were accessing higher education even after the increase in tuition fees". However based on a study conducted by Wilkins, Shams and Huisman (2013), to determine the impact of the 2012 tuition fee increase on students, the writers concluded that students study choice patterns (decisions about their future) were influenced by financial imperatives. The study revealed that from the 1549 students surveyed, 36.0% considered attending a university abroad; 18.6% gave consideration to a cheaper university in the UK; while 25.2% gave thought to landing a job before considering university. Wilkins, et al. (2013) also pointed to a drop in university application levels by 7.4% in 2012/2013 over the previous year as a result of the tuition fee increase (p. 11).

The issue of student fees and access to higher education has also recently reopened the discourse on whether tuition fees should be abolished. During the June 2017 general election, the opposition Labour party proposed the abolition of tuition fees. Youth turnout was the highest in 25 years with 60% of young people aged 16-24 voting in favour of the Labour party according to the Ipsos Mori data (The Guardian, dated 20 June 2017), identifying with its tuition free policy if elected into office and sending a strong message to the incumbent Conservative government.

According to the Head of the National Union of Students (NUS) in the UK:

> *"…The increase in tuition fees over the last few years has been a big issue and that has gotten young people really angry. We want to scrap tuition fees... we want the reintroduction of maintenance grants for the poorer students to have the opportunity to access university and to stay at university. It is one thing that the argument is saying, more people from marginalised backgrounds are accessing but when the NUS look at the figures the number of students that are staying on and are actually completing their studies are very low…" (Shakira Martin on the Victoria Derbyshire TV Programme, UK, June 2017)*

This statement from the NUS supported by the number of young people who recently voted in favour of the opposition party at the general elections, demonstrates the need for government officials to pay closer attention to students by seeking to make this future generation an important part of their education reform policies (Levin, 2000). Representing an elite Australian university, a respondent revealed that 93% of the students were from a middle class background or higher while only 7% of lower SES

gained access. These figures support the response by interviewee #119 and the academic literature cited earlier in this section, that it is less likely for students from poorer backgrounds to enter the best universities (Blanden and Machin, 2004), even while the respondent acknowledged the recognition to increase access among the low SES as follows:

> *"…we spend between $70 and $80 million a year on scholarships out of a total expenditure of about 1.6 billion…we have been in some pretty detailed conversations around how to increase levels of access if fee deregulation comes in across Australia and how we would actually dramatically improve that 7% to something strongly double-digit..." (Senior official #123, Australia, January 2015).*

Despite the uncertainties regarding access to contemporary HE that confronts students from low SES, one institute identified itself as being different from the mainstream. According to a respondent "…*the university is unique in that, built into its charter is its commitment to its local community… one in two of our students are from low SES, 65% are the first in family to go to university and one-third don't speak English at home. It's a very multi-cultural university. We have got the biggest population of Muslim students of any university in the country so to talk about access and equity, this is what we are about, it happens at every level in the institution…" (Senior executive #122, Australia, January 2015).* Respondent #122 seems to suggest that the practice in that particular university contradicts some of the discourses by demonstrating its commitment to the public good agenda and its strategy towards addressing the inequities in its neighbouring community (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009).

While respondents did not support a reduction in the loans and tuition fees they were all of the consensus that a high percentage of loans will not be repaid. A recent Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) report has revealed that 'more than three-quarter of students in the UK will never repay their debts and that most graduates will still be paying off student loans into their 50s' (Belfield, Britton, Dearden and van der Erve, 2017:20). Belfield, et al. (2017) further disclosed that since the 2012 higher education reform, students from the poorest 40% of families were hit the hardest with debts in excess of £57,000 compared with around £43,000 for students from the richest 30% of families as a consequence of the increase in maintenance loans available for poorer students and a corresponding removal of maintenance grants in 2015 (p. 18). These figures further support the ongoing discourses that students from poorer backgrounds appear to be the most vulnerable and most severely affected by government educational policies.

5.4 Summary

This chapter argues that contemporary HEIs have had to depend less on government for their funding support and driven by the pressures of neoliberal reforms of the 1980s they have become marketised and commercialised. The findings of the research revealed growing institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 2000) in the higher education systems of the UK and Australia.

The research questions addressed in this chapter are:

- What are the current forms of university ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure in the UK and Australia? and
- What are the consequences of these regimes for student access?

The forms of HEIs are very different today from what they were prior to the neoliberal reforms of the 19th century. The findings reveal that about 98% of universities in the UK and Australia are autonomous, 'non-profits' in the sense that they are registered charities, even while their "business operations" might suggest otherwise. They are neither owned by government nor the private sector. The remaining 2% are private institutions. Has the higher education system of the UK and Australia become marketised? The answer is yes. Is it commercialised? Clearly. Universities are not financial institutions but the sector has become an industry of its own, increasing in size and influence and generating billions in pounds and dollars for their national economies as well as for universities. Interviewees in this chapter, comprise senior executives/officials within contemporary higher education and they did not agree with the discourses that vice-chancellors were behaving like corporate-style CEOs. However, they defended the need for management within public universities to be strengthened in view of the changing roles and scope of universities and the large amounts of income being received. In other words, interviewees seem to acknowledge that the governance and management structure, as well as the systems and practices of universities had been modelled after that of corporate businesses. Nonetheless, universities have adopted a market-oriented approach to business, in that their *activities* (internationalisation, expansion, promotion, rankings, brand), *products* (curriculum, research) and *services* (pedagogy) are being packaged to appeal to the wants and needs of their customers (students) and demands of the knowledge economy. All interviewees except one, expressed that the international export market (international student recruitment) was good for business and for the national economy and they wished for it to continue.

The consequences of these regimes on students is that students will continue to be treated as customers who may be required to pay much more for their education based on market demands and this is likely to continue impacting the participation rate of the under-privileged because of the economic pressures. All interviewees recognised the need for increased participation of marginalised students in higher education yet they strongly supported governments' policy initiatives to increase tuition fees citing that students were receiving income contingency loans which they did not have to repay until they were in employment and receiving a certain salary. In other words they supported the concept that the user pays since it provided a guaranteed source of income to sustain the operations of universities. Of greater significance to interviewees was the need to protect research grants as well as the adverse effects that students unpaid debts would have on tax payers since they believed that there was a high probability that many students would not repay their loans resulting in a huge deficit for government.

The conversion of polytechnics and colleges to universities during the 20th century has been a disservice to students as it has resulted in homogeneity of the HE system and mass production of education, which does little to enhance students' career path. A participative pedagogy for quality and learning designed for holistic development of students would have resulted in more tangible benefits.

In the next chapter I present and discuss the findings of the four case-study institutions, reflecting the views of students, academics, and management in direct quotations throughout the chapter to understand how they differ from the contemporary orthodox forms.

CHAPTER 6

Findings and Analysis of Case-Study Institutions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings that have been informed by data from case studies of four heterodox institutions undertaken in Europe, India and the US. As explicated in Chapter 1, this study considers heterodox forms of higher education institutions ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure in the context of the UK and Australia. Heterodox models of higher education are not very popular in many countries. Hence, a selected number of those that exist globally among social economy organisations such as cooperatives and trust were identified and analysed for the purpose of this study. Characteristics such as the structure, function and operations of the institutions selected for case-studies will provide the basic framework from which information and data can be extrapolated to develop a resource kit for the proposed heterodox higher education institution model.

Research Assumption

The assumption in this thesis is that universities in the UK and Australia have become marketised and commercialised, making it less likely for marginalised students to access (Barrigos, 2013; Howard, 2001) or to remain (Mourshed , Farrell and Barton, 2013) in higher education thus impacting the student's overall educational experience. For the purpose of this thesis access refers to the ability of these students to gain entry into higher education without having to worry about or to bear the pressure of a significant educational debt. The findings of the case studies as adumbrated in this

chapter will determine to what extent the result support the main research question which is:

- How do heterodox higher education institutional forms differ from orthodox university forms in relation to ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure?

Forty-nine (49) interviews were conducted with senior executives, directors of finance, heads of faculty, directors of learning and teaching and academic staff among the four institutions. All interviewees were asked questions on the subjects of ownership, governance, financing and the organisational structure of their institutions as well as teaching and learning and curriculum development. A total of 35 students were placed in 5 focus groups that were interviewed across the selected institutions. Students were also observed in different settings such as in a classroom, participating in the labour programme (in offices, factories, on farms), participating in organised public speaking, conducting governance meetings and during institutional social gatherings.

The findings of the case-studies based on the main research question which answers the 'how' will be discussed. The chapter is divided into 5 additional sections. Section 6.2 provides an overview of each institution. Section 6.3 discusses the structural dimensions of each case study institution in terms of the ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure. Section 6.4 examines and discusses ways in which these models of ownership, governance financing and organisational structure enhance students' experiences. Section 6.5 deals with limitations of the case-study

institutions on students' experiences. Finally, section 6.6, summarises the key findings of the research.

The data contained in this chapter are obtained from focus group interviews involving students', in-depth open-ended interviews with management and faculty and observations during the fieldwork. The data is gleaned from the insights of persons at the highest echelon of the administrative hierarchy of each institution down to individual students, hence, the triangulation used in the study underscores the validity and reliability of the data. It must be noted that pseudonyms have been used throughout the chapter to conceal the identity of each institution.

6.2 Overview of Case-Study Institutions

Case-Study 1 – Unity University

Unity University was established in the 1990s as a cooperative[21] university in a small town in a country in Europe[22], with a mission to become the principal agent in the transformation of its society (Altuna, 2016). According to management, Unity aims for a fairer, just and equitable society through job creation, educating the society, research and knowledge transfer and the internationalisation of its projects. The university comprises four autonomous faculties, three of which existed long before the university was formed. Unity is also part of a wider consortium of more than 100 independent

[21] A cooperative is an autonomous association of people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled business (http://ica.coop/en/what-co-operative)

[22] The wider geographical area of Europe has been used as the descriptor to protect the identity of the university

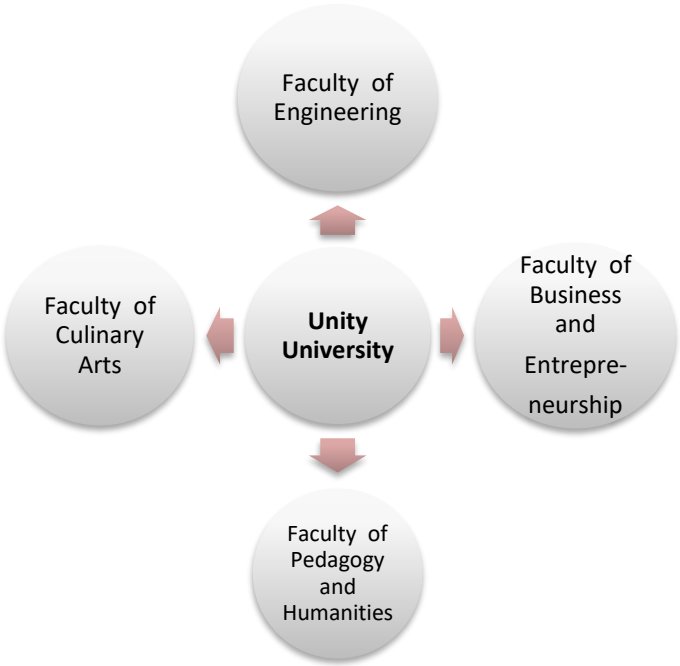
enterprises that are well established within the region and employs more than 80,000 member workers. Its origin dates back to the 1940s when the now school of engineering was founded as a school for apprentices by a young priest who set out to liberate unemployed youth in the community from poverty and deprivation through education (Thomas and Logan, 2017), following the country's civil war. He sought to develop a high level of technical expertise in the students to help rebuild the community and to instil in them the value of education and collaboration of efforts in the transformation of society. His philosophy was that 'no one should be slave or master of anyone but that everyone should work for the benefit of everyone else' (Ormaechea, 1993). This credo remains the bedrock of Unity University as it is claimed by management of the institution that every member works in solidarity for the betterment of each other.

Following the establishment of the first faculty, the members decided to open a faculty of business and entrepreneurship to develop leaders in the community and to teach young people the skills necessary to pioneer their own businesses, thereby generating and spreading wealth among the masses. A faculty of humanities was later established to train educators in order to help keep the autochthonous language (indigenous language spoken by inhabitants of the community) alive. These three independent faculties would soon lead members to realise the need for a fourth institution to be called Unity University. This umbrella body was designed to be the central coordinating unit of the three faculties, while they would continue to maintain their autonomy. More than a decade later the university was instrumental in driving the formation of a fourth faculty that specialises in the training and research of food science and which has become internationally recognised in the local culinary culture (Altuna, 2016). Each of the four faculties that comprised the university (see Figure 6.1) is an independent legal

non-profit enterprise working collaboratively (Wright, Greenwood and Boden, 2011) towards the achievement of collective goals. According to a respondent:

> *"When the university was created there was a discussion of whether we should be one big institution or to stay autonomous. But after 20 years we have kept separate faculties because we think it is a good way of running the university. We have different committees in which we come together as one and there is collaboration on issues like student fees, curriculum, salaries et cetera, but each faculty has its own budget, its own policies and incomes, everything is independent…" (Respondent #110, November 2015)*

Figure 6.1 – Structural Constituent of Unity University



Unity's four faculties are spread out in nine locations/campuses in the region. While the institution is under private ownership, management explained that it is "a non-profit, with a social vocation", which means that all of its services are undertaken for the

benefit of the wider community. According to a management official, “internal competition among faculties and affiliated member organisations’ is non-existent because all units work cooperatively and in solidarity with each other towards the collective good of the university” (Respondent #108, November 2015). This level of collaboration is also further demonstrated among faculties who share in the profits and losses of each other by pooling their profits together to defray any potential losses (Hansmann, 2000) as a form of inter-cooperation, thus helping to strengthen the institution as explained by a management official.

Unity is a medium sized institution with 4200 full time students across the university and an additional 6000 continuing education or professional students from the business community. This means that the university attracts more working professionals who are enrolled in part-time courses and this is understood from the perspective that Unity works very closely with companies in the community who also sit on its governing body in an advisory capacity and provide internships to students. Arguments could be put forward for and against corporations on the institution’s governing body but management was quick to advise that the companies understand and respect the values and principles governing the institution.

Unity offers PhD programmes in three main fields, 30 master’s degree courses, 16 undergraduate courses, 12 diploma courses and some other postgraduate courses for professional students. Engineering attracts the largest number of continuing education students while Culinary Arts has the smallest number. Most of the students are from the community in which the university is located and are from lower middle to middle socio-economic backgrounds. A total of 728 masters and doctoral students are enrolled

of which an estimated 200 are international students. Some of these students are part of the Erasmus Mundus exchange programme[23] and they originate from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. A trilingual approach to the pedagogy is adopted with the native language being the main language of instruction although classes are also taught in English. Tuition fees range from 6,000 Euros (approximately £5,400) to 8,000 Euros (about £7,200), depending on the programme of study. International students in the exchange programme pay no tuition fees and they are taught the native language at no cost to them.

Case-Study 2 – Gramuco University

Gramuco is located in a rural state in India. It is the first university of its kind in that part of the world to offer higher education in cooperative management. The university was established under an act of Parliament less than a decade ago, as a teaching and residential university with the aim of transforming the socio-economic landscape of the region in which it operates. It does so through its formal academic programmes, and through training offered to grassroots youth from a government grant to improve their skillset. The university promotes the concept of cooperativism in its pedagogy and student experience, although being structured and governed in a completely different way. It does this through teaching, counselling and training of students in entrepreneurship and cooperative management to help drive the development of cooperatives in the region and to enable them to pursue businesses of their own. "The university is also committed to capacity building through training of workers and members of cooperatives in an effort to strengthen the cooperative movement, thus

[23] European Union student exchange programme aimed at globalising European education.

fostering economic growth and addressing social justice issues, where only a few benefit from wealth creation according" to the Chief Minister with responsibility for the region and the driving force behind the formation of the university (Respondent #138, February, Gramuco University, 2015).

Gramuco operates in a predominantly agriculturally based region with a population of roughly 30 million and an average literacy rate of 73 per cent (78.8 male; 67.3% female), slightly below the national average of 74 per cent. There are over 10,000 cooperative societies covering almost every field of economic activity. The university is timely and well positioned to fulfil its stated mission of initiating, strengthening and sustaining the cooperative movement and the socio-economic development of the society at large. Gramuco is built on pillars of education, training, research and promotion. *Education* for widening knowledge and learning; *training* for enhancing skills and managerial capacity; *research* for searching new innovative spheres; and *promotion* for building cadres of professional managers and development of the cooperative movement and the rural economy (University Act, 2010). Respondent #138 clarified the thinking behind the establishment of the university.

> *"…We are in a market economy that leads to disparity. The whole idea is how to improve the masses and not just a few. So to improve the common man we have to go for the cooperative model by providing management and entrepreneurial training to help develop the cooperative movement. Therefore the vast majority of the population will benefit from this new type of cooperative training. We are looking at social justice and economic justice; so this was the basic reason we decided to go for a university that is different from the mainstream"* (February 2015).

The respondent's perspective is consistent with the argument made by Brown and Carasso (2013) and McGettigan (2013) that the trend in higher education today is towards marketization and commercialisation, while the participation rate of students from marginalised backgrounds remain low (Burke, 2013) even with a mass higher education system. The view expressed by the respondent in relation to cooperatives and social justice has been supported in the literature. These enterprises are said to have been started by a few community members almost two centuries ago in rebellion to the poverty, exclusion and inequalities confronting them at the time (Lafleur and Merrien, 2012). According to Harrison (2013) they represent an alternative form of social enterprise that addresses the main problems of capitalism. The respondent's comment is also consistent with Birchall and Ketilson's (2009) conceptualisation that the strength of these enterprises lie in their impressive sustainability in times of global economic crisis being uniquely member owned. This study aims to address the social inequality (that preclude under-represented students from accessing higher education) by creating accessible and affordable opportunities through the proposed heterodox higher education institutional model, for many more underprivileged students to access higher education as is their right, provided for in Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights (Toprak, 2006).

Compared to the western and southern parts of India, Gramuco is situated in a region where growth and job opportunities are low due to insufficient industries. In 2011 unemployment stood at 6.4 per cent, which is 33 per cent lower than the national average of 9.5 per cent (The Telegraph dated 3 September 2011). The cooperative movement also requires skilled management personnel to drive industry and commerce and management is of the view that the university is one strategy adopted to take the

region into a different path in order to generate economic growth. The university seeks to achieve its aim of socio-economic development 'by empowering individuals, through education, to become managers and entrepreneurs of small to medium size businesses' (Respondent #151, February 2015).

At the time of my fieldwork, Gramuco had a total of 40 students. It offers 5 undergraduate disciplines including a 3-year BBA degree in cooperative management, and an undergraduate degree in entrepreneurship and innovation. Included in its curriculum are five undergraduate degree courses. Gramuco offers four master's courses as well as a certificate and postgraduate diploma course. The university will commence its PhD programme in 2019. It currently has five schools/faculties as shown in Figure 6.2 central to which lies the holistic pursuit of cooperative development.

Figure 6.2: Schools within Gramuco

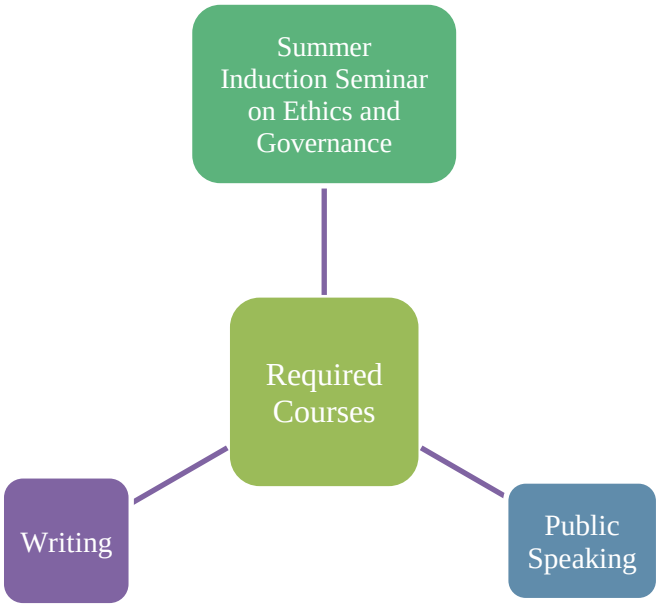
Case-study 3 – Davena College

Davena is a progressive junior college of 28 all-male students located on an isolated cattle ranch in eastern California. It offers a two-year associate degree in the liberal arts. The college was founded in the 1900s by an entrepreneur and energy magnate in hydroelectric power sector. He developed this radical non-profit institution with the aim of educating and developing young people for leadership and enlightened service to humanity (Constitution and Deed of Trust, 1923). The college is so idiosyncratic that since its inception almost a century ago, less than 2000 students have been matriculated. This is not to say that there is no demand for places. Every year the college receives almost 300 applications but only admits approximately 10 students. This is because of its small size and policy of the founder to deliberately keep the size of the student population small to enable the college to effectively achieve its mission of preparing young people for a life of service to humanity. Such a policy could, however, raise questions around issues of access and selectivity.

The founder worked for many years in the power business before turning his attention to education. He founded Davena College after discovering that a self-governed model in a large orthodox university where former young technicians from his power company were trained and accommodated (in a house that he built for them), did not offer the type of educational experience that he had envisioned for his young workers. Davena is founded on the pillars of liberal arts education, manual labour and student self-governance. In other words students receive an education that challenges them intellectually as well as physically (Breiseth, 1983). There are no schools within Davena College but it offers a total of 9 courses only during the academic year in the

social sciences, natural sciences and humanities, while students take two or three full courses at a time. There are only three required courses on which students are evaluated as shown in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3: Required Courses at Davena College



All students are awarded a full scholarship for the duration of their two years' study currently valued at around £39,000 annually including all meals regardless of their socio-economic background. Students however take responsibility for incidental costs such as books and personal effects. These costs are minimal since the college is already absorbing the costs of tuition, room and board. However, financial aid is available for students in the event they are unable to meet these additional costs. Most students are from upper to middle income backgrounds, which was originally intended, with a very small percentage of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The student body is very conscious of the inequity and has been working towards changing the

demographics for diversity and inclusivity by reaching out to more racially international and less privileged students. In 2015, 39% of the students were of colour while eight originated from five countries outside the U.S.; six were first generation college students (Davena College 2015 Annual Report). The college has operated as an all-male institution since its inception and in June 2017 it received approval to commence the process of allowing access to female students for the first time.

In 2012, the college was ranked number one among America's 50 best colleges. Students admitted to the college are in the top 1 percentile of the national average SAT scores. These young men have continued their studies at elite institutions like Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Cornell, Stanford, Oxford and Cambridge. About 50% of graduates have gone on to obtain a doctorate degree. Alumni include U.S. ambassadors, members of Congress, heads of corporations, university presidents, distinguished scholars, prominent news analysts, lawyers, doctors, journalists, authors, religious leaders, entrepreneurs. Others have ventured out into non-profit administration and community activism.

Case-Study 4 – Batista College

Batista was founded in the Southeast region of the U.S. in the 1800s as an interracial and co-educational institution during the pre-Civil-War era by a small group of abolitionist Christians to liberate young people from the depths of poverty and help them to realise their full potential. The founder, who was a scholar and religious leader, envisioned a school that would be an advocate of equality and excellence in education for men and women of all races. His vision was to make high quality education accessible and affordable to African Americans and poor white men and women all

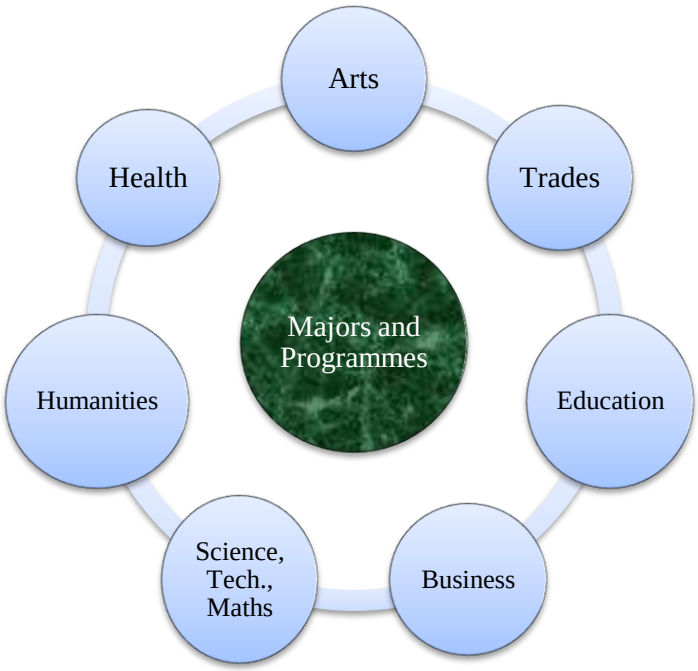
under one roof, consistent with its maxim: 'God has made of one blood all peoples of the Earth'.

One of the main attractions of Batista is that all admitted students are awarded a tuition-free scholarship valued at around £18,600 annually, which means that none of the students will ever have to pay for tuition fees (Berry and Strong, 2016). What is more striking is that Batista provides access only to students from low socio-economic backgrounds who are unable to finance their education but demonstrate high academic potential. Accommodation and living expenses which amount to an estimated £7,800 are the responsibility of students. This is paid in part by the student or by federal and state aid on the basis of students' family household income. Students' average family household income is about £21,700 and 52% have a family household income of £12,000 or less. Students with such low family household income are awarded a full scholarship. International students receive full scholarships. Most of Batista's students are the first in their family to gain a college degree. Batista is a small college with a total student population of 1600 consisting of around 57% female and 43% male. The educational programme is built on the pillars of learning, labour and service to community and to others, and engenders the college's Great commitments.[24] The

[24] (i) to provide an educational opportunity primarily for students from the community, black and white, all of whom have great promise and limited economic resources; (ii) to provide an education of high quality with a liberal arts foundation and outlook; (iii) to stimulate understanding of the Christian faith and its many expressions and to emphasize the Christian ethic and the motive of service to others; (iv) to provide for all students through the labour program experiences for learning and serving in community and to demonstrate that labour, mental and manual, has dignity as well as utility; (v) to assert the kinship of all people and to provide interracial education with a particular emphasis on understanding and equality among blacks and whites; (vi) to create a democratic community dedicated to education and equality for women and men; (vii) to maintain a residential campus and to encourage in all members of the community a way of life characterized by plain living, pride in labour well done, zest for learning, high personal standards and concern for the welfare of others; (viii) to serve the community primarily through education but also by other appropriate services.

college offers undergraduate degree programmes only with more than 32 courses included in the curriculum. There are no schools within Baptista College but its majors and programmes are as shown in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4: Majors and Programmes at Batista College



At the time of its establishment Batista intended to serve students within its community. Student recruitment now extends throughout the U.S. and in more than 50 countries internationally. International students make up approximately 15% of the total student population. Around a third of students are of black or minority ethnic heritage. Students average above 24 in the composite ACT score for English, mathematics, reading and science. This is well above the national ACT average of 20% and Batista's students rank in the top 25% of the national average tests score (Zhang, 2014). Many graduates

have gone on to receive doctoral degrees in various fields. Two alumni have been awarded a Nobel Prize. Other graduates have advanced to professions in education, government, business/entrepreneurship, law, writing, acting and movie production. The college itself was named the top liberal arts institution in America in 2011 by the Washington Monthly for its commitment to social mobility, educational excellence and service to community. I now consider and discuss what alternative structures of ownership, governance, financing and organisation that the case study institutions offer which might be constituted into new higher education institutional forms in relation to the third subsidiary research question. A summary of the elements of the case study institutions is contained in Table 6.1.

6.3 Structural Dimensions of Case-Study Institution

Ownership/Control

Ownership title of the four case-study institutions varies widely with two of them having student beneficial ownership while the other two were differently owned. Unity University is wholly owned, governed and controlled by its members who fall into three categories: students (referred to as users because of their nominal capital investment), workers and affiliated partner organisations (See Figure 6.5). Upon enrolment with the university students make a one-time nominal non-refundable investment of the equivalent of £5 in the first month of enrolment, which represent their vested financial stake in the institution as a member/owner according to a respondent and which entitles them to full voting rights and to participate in decision making.

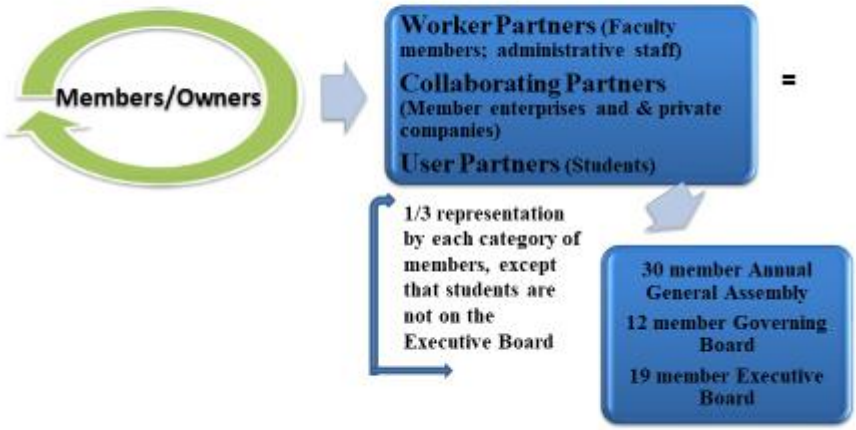
Table 6.1: Summary of Elements of the Case-Study Institutions

Institution	Ownership/Control	Governance	Financing	Organisational Structure
Unity University	Members (workers, students, affiliated partners)	Democratic governance: 30 persons on annual general assembly with equal representation of members 12 persons on BOD (4 students represented on the board)	Members capital contribution; Tuition fees; Research; Non-competitive grant; Affiliated partner contribution	Operated by members who are the owners
Davena College	Students	Democratic governance (13 member BOT); 2 student rep.	Endowment; Philanthropists	Operated by 3 paid staff and students
Gramuco University	Government	13-member Executive Council; No student rep.	Government	Operated by paid staff
Batista College	Private	Board of Trustees	Endowment; Fund raising; Philanthropists Business Investments	Operated by paid staff and students

Alternatively, workers pay a one-time £10,600 equivalent to become a member/owner. This amount is capitalised and remains the individual worker's shares invested in the institution which accumulates with annual interest at the rate of 6% and upon the age of retirement they will be able to claim their accumulated profit shares (Hansmann, 2000). Because students are enrolled at the institution for a limited time, upon graduation they are no longer a member of the institution neither do they receive interest on their nominal investment. This was explained by a management official who

indicated that "the understanding is that students have gained by receiving a good education that they can now use to give back to the community" (Respondent #107, Unity University, November 2015).

Figure 6.5: Types of Members and Participation in Governance – Unity University



Despite the set timeframe in which students are enrolled at Unity, they share equal membership rights as any other member. This was clarified by a respondent who mentioned that: "students invest a limited amount of money in the university but they have the same decision-making powers as full paying members" (Respondent, #108, November, Unity University, 2014). The perspective of the respondent demonstrates that students and workers alike have a vested interest in the institution and are considered equal partners. More importantly, ownership title or decisions taken within the institution are not influenced by the amount of capital investment of any one member but by the body as a collective (Altuna, 2016) pointing to a form of collegiality among the member/owners. This spirit of collegiality has been captured by Wright, Greenwood and Boden (2011) who argue that members work in solidarity with each other towards a common good. In the words of an official the nature of the relationship

among the members is such that "there is no need for lawyers and unions in the university because conflicts are resolved at the general assembly by the members/owners" (Respondent #109, November 2014).

Similar to Unity University, Davena College is owned by the student body. The dissimilarity is that workers have no ownership title to Davena College. The founder made current and prospective students beneficial owners of the college and all its property (Smith and Newell, 2000). In doing so, the founder was engaging in a separation of ownership of the trust and physical assets (Berle and Means, 1932; Jensen and Meckling, 1976) from its control by the board of trustees and the student body; a strategy which was designed to protect the trust and the college's assets for the educational benefit of future generation of students (See Wright, Greenwood and Boden, 2011).

Gramuco University on the other hand is owned by the state meaning that students have no ownership title. According to a management official "… The government owns the assets… yes… even the land is allocated to the university but the university cannot sell it nor lease it. The property belongs to the state government; the university is only the custodian" (Respondent #151, Gramuco University, February 2015). The respondent further highlights a separation of ownership from control (Berle and Means, 1932), similar to Davina College with the exception that Davina students are beneficial owners of the institution which is placed in trust and managed by a board of trustees, unlike the students of Gramuco University.

The fourth institution (Batista College) is a private non-profit independent charity held in trust for educational purposes. The college has no shareholders and no legal owners. Therefore there is no one to lay claim on the college's property and assets for personal pecuniary gain (Boden, Ciancanelli and Wright, 2012) but in the unlikely event of the college being liquidated the assets would be transferred to another charitable organisation or to the government according to a senior official.

Based on the findings Unity University and Davena College are the two exemplars of alternative forms of ownership among the case study institutions in which students are beneficial owners and which demonstrates that power lies not in the hands of a few executives but in the students and workers reflecting a collaborative and participatory alternative to top-down governance (Newell, 2000; Wright, Greenwood and Boden, 2011). The two other institutions are not owned by students thus limiting their involvement in key institutional processes. As discussed later in the chapter there are other benefits that Batista offers to students even while they may not be beneficial owners. In the case of Gramuco which is a government owned institution, management serves as stewards (Thompson and Doherty, 2006) of the assets for the benefit of stakeholders. This is similar to the findings among some contemporary universities as discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

Governance and Organisational Structure

As already mentioned in Chapter 1, for the purpose of this study governance is referred to as 'the system of checks and balances, both internal and external to organisations/institutions, which ensures that they discharge their accountability to all

stakeholders and act in a socially responsible way in all areas of their business activity' (Keasey and Wright,1993:7).

In all case-study institutions, there are clearly designated responsibilities along a hierarchy but some structures were flatter than others, meaning that there are more layers within the structure. Quite noticeable was the level of students' involvement in democratic governance at two institutions (Unity and Davena). In three of the institutions (Unity, Batista and Davena) students were involved as a matter of policy in the day-to-day operations working alongside permanent workers. Students could be found working in every department, office, in the community on the farm or even in a student factory (in the case of Unity) and it would be difficult to differentiate between the employed workers and students because of the level of professionalism with which the students approached their labour duties outside of their academic studies particularly at Batista and Davena. It is noteworthy that students are paid for their labour by two of the institutions (See Table 6.2) and the wages paid to the students help to subsidize their tuition fees, accommodation or other related expenses. Three institutions also identify internships for students while one of these institutions exclusively sends students out on internships for their professional and personal development because it is a relatively new university and does not have a work programme in place.

The findings demonstrate the level of diversity within the structure of the four institutions suggesting a no-one-size-fits-all approach (Tödtling and Trippl, 2005; Westheimer, 2005) because of the community specific nature of these institutions. An underpinning principle of Unity University as a member-owned and-operated institution, is its democratic decision-making process in governance and operations of

the institution. The institution's highest decision making authority is the annual general assembly comprising 30 representatives of all members across the faculties, who meet to discuss and to ratify strategic decisions of interest to the university including financial matters, workers' wages (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Hansmann, 2000) and to elect representatives to serve on the governing body (board of directors) and other important internal audit committees. A highlight of the governance structure is that students, workers and collaborating partners have an equal number of representatives on the annual general assembly (See Figure 6.3). What this signifies is that control of the university is in the hands of all members (Cheffins, 2008) again pointing to the democratic nature of the institution in governance and operations. According to a respondent strategic decisions are taken 'through a democratic process of one member one vote' (Respondent #107, Unity University, November 2014) thus providing a level playing field for all categories of members and giving students an equal voice at the highest level of decision making within the institution.

Table 6.2: Students Involvement in the Case Study Institutions

Institution	Students in Governance	Work/Labour Programme	Internship	Students are paid for their work
Unity University	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gramuco University			✓	
Davena College	✓	✓		
Batista College	In lower level governance	✓	✓	✓

Students are also represented on the governing board and academic board as explained by a respondent: "there are 4 student representatives on the 12 member governing body so the students' voices are very important" (Respondent #111, Unity University,

November 2014). Meanwhile Cook (2013) raises a pertinent point in relation to the decisions carried by students in governance noting that "students tend to be present at their institution for a few years only, and hence do not have to live with the consequences of their decisions" (p. 26). While this is an important observation made by Cook (2013), in an institution such as Unity where decisions are taken collectively and democratically at the level of the general membership of the institution, I argue that students (also members) are not expected to bear the consequences of decisions taken collectively by the members in good faith and in the best interest of the institution as a body corporate, unless that student/member had acted in his/her personal capacity (De Barbieri and Glick, 2011).

As members of the university, students have the right to participate in governance, yet, not everyone takes advantage as noted by a student: "students have the right to be on the council. Some are heavily involved but others do not take advantage" (Student 5 response, Unity University, November 2014). The respondent's observation is analogous to corporations where there are numerous dispersed shareholders resulting in shareholder apathy and providing a window of opportunity for management to take effective control (Cheffins, 2008). While some students might appear to have adopted a laissez faire attitude to governance, the student body remains equally represented in governance and the democratic and participatory nature of Unity members in controlling their institution and in key decision making processes (Altuna, 2016) seeks to minimize the creation of 'self-policing' organisations (Hansmann, 2000) as the managers are also member/owners of the institution.

Central to the functioning of the university is its close working relationship with industry and "there are industry representatives who participate and vote in the general assembly and are also represented on the governing body in an advisory capacity" (Respondent #108, Unity University, November 2014). The networking relationship with industry was clarified by a respondent who indicated that "the university was created from the demands of the businesses and the community for formal education so it has been a university in close contact with companies". According to the respondent, "they are on our board of directors and tell us what they need and whatever we design in the curriculum goes with that…" (Respondent #107, Unity University, November 2014).

It is clear from the responses that the university acknowledges the significance of providing students with an academic qualification. The university is also of the view that it is equally important to prepare students for a future beyond HE by providing them with the necessary skills and training that will make them relevant in today's changing global business environment since graduates will be residing in and seeking gainful employment in their communities (Lowden, Hall, Elliot and Lewin, 2011). This position is advanced, despite the academic discourse that universities are expected to take on a new role of training students for employability (Boden and Nedeva, 2010; Brown, Hesketh and Williams, 2004; Castells, 2001). The findings in this section will reveal that in as much as students view their higher education academic credentials as essential (Tomlinson, 2008) they also believed that the technical skills and soft skills provided by their respective institutions was an added value that would position them for employability upon graduation.

In the UK, the sharp increase in students' fees appear to have resulted in a corresponding sharp increase in the remuneration packages of top executives in some of the leading public universities. (Bachan, 2008; Times Higher Education of 14 September 2017). At Unity University in comparison, salaries are ratified through a democratic process of the annual general assembly of the members, thus ensuring transparency and equity of pay to workers across faculties. Unity's policy provides for the head of the institution to be paid six times the salary of the lowest paid worker moving from an original ratio of three times that of the lowest paid worker. In the words of a respondent the adjustment in this differential between those who earn the most and those who earn the least is because of the difficulty in attracting leaders at a lower wage ceiling. The movement from a ratio of 3:1 to a ratio of 6:1 could be perceived by some as a form of disparity almost similar to the discourse in contemporary higher education about vice-chancellors pay (Boden, Ciancanelli and Wright, 2012). However the gap between the highest and lowest paid workers salaries was set at the minimum national rate, remaining lower than that of similar institutions according to a management official and imposed merely as a ceiling with the rest of the consortium member organisations, while the university had the flexibility to adjust the index lower as necessary (Hansmann, 2000).

Like Unity University, Davena College is also guided by principles of democracy and self-governance. The college and all its property is held in trust by a board of trustees but students are involved in all aspects of governance, management and operations. This is exactly how the founder envisioned the college to run when he vested the student body with full rights, power and authority of democratic self-governance including control of the conduct of its members and shared governance throughout the college's

operations (Newell, 2000). To ensure that his vision for students was honoured, the founder intentionally granted the student body one seat on the then 9-member board of trustees (BOT) but when the number of board members increased to 13, the number of student representatives on the BOT also increased to two instead of one, thus enhancing students influence as beneficial owners of the college (Newell, 2000). A senior official elucidated the power of the student body in governance and operations:

> *"…and the board, by the way, has no committees without students on it. There is nothing the board can do without the student knowing about it … and it's partly, because ... the founder of the college said that the students are the beneficial owners of the college and they take that to mean that this is all ours … as a legal term it means … students all receive the benefits of the property even though they are not the legal donors, and the board takes it very seriously" (Respondent response No. 27, Davena College, September 2015).*

This revelation by the respondent indicates that the trustees understand their role within the institution as being accountable to those who hold them in stewardship (Solomon, 2007). The respondent's statement is consistent with stewardship theory of governance which assumes that managers want to do a good job and are ready to be effective stewards of the institution's assets (Cornforth, 2003). The response also assumes mutual trusts between trustees, management and students as beneficial owners, who work together as partners for a common good, eliminating the need to provide management with financial incentives to avoid the possibility of individual opportunistic behaviour (Greenwood and Van Buren III, 2010). This level of trust and collaboration came across clearly during my interviews with management and students. Davena's BOTs is largely made up of alumni and industry professionals charged with

the governance of the college and protecting the interest of current and future generation of students. Students also play a pivotal role on the BOTs. According to a respondent:

> *"…students have full voting rights. Every year we elect an academic affairs trustee and… a budget and operations trustee. Academic affairs deals with matters of the curriculum, where we want to see the school going, like academic diversity, issues of this sort; and then we have a student body trustee who is on budget and operations, which deals with capital investments, all these things…" (Student response No. 13, Davena College, September 2015)*

The response from #13 above means that students have accepted their legitimate right to participatory and institutional self-governance (Gaventa, 2004) in keeping with the founder's wishes when he made them beneficial owners by transferring the college to them in an irrevocable trust (Newell, 2000) and they have taken on that responsibility seriously. The BOTs is supported at the operational level by the college president, who reports to the board and also to the student body which is governed by its own set of by-laws. The student body appoints a student president from among the students on a four months rotational basis thus allowing students a chance at leadership. The college president is assisted by three administrators - an academic dean, an office manager and a development director. The college employs only five workers at the operational level as well as three permanent professors and two visiting professors.

Davena's flat structure which is due to intense participation of students in all aspects of operations, albeit owing to the scale of the college, appear to have suppressed the corporate culture and power through executive authority that some parts of the literature claim to be problematic in contemporary higher education institutions (Deem, Fulton,

Reed and Watson, 2001; Mc Nay, 1995 and Middlehurst, 2004). Students take the lead on important matters such as hiring faculty members, reviewing the conduct of lecturers, curriculum development, student admissions, peer review and re-inviting their peers to the next academic year based on performance. These decisions are undertaken by three separate committees made up of students - curriculum, applications and review and re-invitation committee. The *curriculum committee* provides guidance on course selection, reviews applications from prospective professors, establishes academic policy in collaboration with faculty, shortlists applicants, conducts interviews, recommends suitable candidates to the college president, reviews academic misconduct where necessary and makes recommendation for their continued employment. The *applications committee* reviews applications from prospective students and selects incoming students for each academic year. Meanwhile the *review and re-invitation committee* carries out an assessment of students' progress during the academic year to determine their suitability for re-invitation to the next school year as there is no automatic upgrade to the next school year. A faculty member provided a succinct account of the experience while attending an interview with the students prior to recruitment:

> *"When I came for the interview I presented a lecture ... the students all listened and then engaged with me at the end of that lecture asking questions and seeing how I responded, my intellect, what sort of disposition I had … how they found the lecture. I ate dinner with them and the conversation continued. So, they get a very close look at the people that they are going to hire…, a closer look than a lot of faculty members get when they hire a colleague. So they ask you all sorts of questions. They'll ask personal questions, about your academic interest, about where you've taught, where you've been, but also, they are very pressing in programme. As I say, I gave that lecture and the students are very*

competent and they ask extremely penetrating, interesting questions and, if you stumble and you look like you don't know what you are talking about, you can't really rise to the challenge and this back and forth affects their decision regarding you" (Respondent #026, Davena College, September 2015).

Another respondent openly reflected on the experience with the student body which demonstrate the students' active participation in the institution and in high level decision making processes.

"…that's one of the more interesting things about the place, because, you know, most places the curriculum is set by academic staff, and here the students participate so deeply in the governance, they participate in the curriculum too… So, they don't just weigh in, but in fact, in concert with the dean and president, they are hiring the faculty … when I came to interview here it was much an interview with the students as with anybody else. So they hired me and then I proposed several courses to them… and they choose the ones that they would like for the semester. So to a remarkable degree, the curriculum was actually chosen by the students, yeah, within certain parameters that are established by the administration". (Respondent #025, Davena College, September 2015).

The views expressed by the respondents suggest a redistribution of power (Blackmore and Sachs, 2012) as mentioned earlier, involving increased student participation in shared institutional governance and decision making (Menon, 2010) with faculty and workers through a democratic process (Boden, Ciancanelli and Wright, 2012; Wright and Greenwood, 2017). Jagersma (2010) argues that students (as learners) have been excluded from the process of curriculum design in most higher education institutions. However as exemplified by Davena College, students could stand to benefit more from their education when they are empowered to participate as co-creators of the curriculum

(McCulloch, 2009; Neary and Winn, 2017). Research has also shown that this level of participation may lead to greater engagement and impact on their pedagogy and learning experiences (Bovill, 2009; Jagersma, 2010). Students learning experiences will be discussed in more detail in the next session.

Davena's small community of students, faculty and staff reside and work together in a communal relationship on campus thus contributing to strengthening the spirit of solidarity and collegium culture (Mc Nay, 1995) that exist. This sentiment was expressed succinctly by a respondent as follows:

> *"… one thing that I have seen which I am very impressed with here is how collaborative everything is. I mean there's a rather tight community between the faculty, administration, staff and the students. The place I come from…it is simply top-down. The administration tells the faculty what's going to happen. Here, the atmosphere is about as different from that. It's collaborative. I mean, you are invited to voice your opinion, your opinions are taken very seriously, yeah, there's a kind of very collegial atmosphere that's extremely refreshing from my point of view" (Respondent #025, Davena College, September 2015)*

The spirit of collegiality and collaboration at Davena College as expressed by the respondent is also characteristic of the other two case-study institutions and is in sharp contrast to some of the thinking in the literature which claims that institutional change at the level of governance in contemporary higher education institutions appear to be more managerial than collegial (Kezar and Eckel, 2004; Middlehurst, 2004). The argument of a top-down culture (Wright and Greenwood, 2017) in higher education has also been associated with the introduction of New Public Management or 'new managerialism' (Amaral, Meek and Larsen, 2003; Tolofari, 2005) with its intended

purpose of 'reforming managerial behaviour' (McCourt and Minogue, 2001) and the argument that it has been designed to disengage the academic community in governance (McNay, 2006). However the spirit of collaboration among students, faculty, workers and management at Unity and Davena are consistent with the approach to self-governance and self-management that constitutes their DNA (Christensen and Eyring, 2011). Likewise, the involvement of students in all aspects of governance and management particularly at Davena College suggests a reduction in layers of supervisors and managers who normally act as enforcers and have to be paid huge compensation packages (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

Gramuco University is very different in its governance structure from Unity and Davena. The university is governed by a 13-member executive council which deals with policy and financial matters and the appointment of staff with the exception of the vice-chancellor who is appointed by the Chief Minister. The Act provides for Deans, Professors, Readers (who are heads of departments) and head of training division to form part of the governance structure via the academic council and board of studies (Sections 32 and 33 of the Act). Two heads of department of the university who are professors and a dean of faculty are included on the executive council. Unlike the previous two institutions, students do not take part in governance neither are they represented on the academic council which has overall responsibility and control for maintaining the standards of the pedagogy, education and examinations. This was confirmed when I posed the question: What is the role of students in governance? According to the respondent:

> *"Students are not meant to take decisions for management. Students are actually for education we believe. There is a student body that is consulted*

sometimes about what is to be done, but not necessarily that students will be asked to join in management decisions" (Respondent #151, Gramuco University, February 2015)

It should be noted that students do not have beneficial or de jure ownership title to Gramuco University and it would appear that they are not viewed as collaborators and partners in institutional governance and processes (Wright and Greenwood, 2017) in the same way as students of Unity University and Davena College have been. This is despite the fact that the university promotes the concept of cooperativism in its pedagogy and student experiences albeit with the aim of transforming the socio-economic landscape of the community in which it operates. The university's Act of Incorporation however, makes provision for two students to be appointed on the 27-member annual general assembly (S. 25). The annual general assembly is the highest decision making authority and has responsibility for reviewing and making recommendations for improvement to board policies and programmes. It also ratifies the annual financial statements, inter alia. With a ratio of 27:2 on the annual general assembly, students may be inadvertently overshadowed in influencing decisions (Lizzo and Wilson, 2009). These sentiments were expressed by students who mentioned that "students have no power, it is only management". According to a student, "sometimes we would like to speak out more on issues but this is a small group of students and we do not want to jeopardise our careers because we can easily be identified" (Student 6 response, Gramuco University, February 2015). Despite these comments, students mentioned that they were listened to and their concerns addressed on the occasions in which they had cause to speak out.

The university is relatively new and this contributes to the small size of the student population and some of the concerns expressed by them. Although Gramuco is a small

university it has the potential to become a medium-sized institution when it is relocated to its permanent campus. The university has had incredibly humble beginnings. In the absence of permanent headquarters and with a determination to expedite its launch the vice-chancellor began operating from a small rented room with two administrative staff, where they conducted official business for a period of nine months before relocating to their temporary campus at the time of my field visit. But even this building was not fully operational and some simple tables and chairs were rented to work from. The vice-chancellor subsequently received budget approval to recruit six core faculty staff. With the commencement of the undergraduate degree programme three years following the establishment of the university, temporary academic staff were recruited on a as needs basis as sanctioned by the executive board, to teach the first batch of 30 students who had enrolled. Gramuco is still evolving and had a total of 17 faculty members, 2 administrative staff and 40 students at the time of my visit. The university is headed by a vice-chancellor who reports to the Executive Council.

Twenty-nine per cent of the faculty members hold a doctoral degree while the rest possess a Master's degree and are working towards their doctoral education. The government has donated 83 acres of land to be used as the university's permanent site and which will have the capacity to accommodate 2000 students upon completion. Excavation work on the lands had already begun when I visited the site and the new university was projected to be completed in 2018. At the time of my visit, management and academic staff worked closely together, sharing responsibilities to ensure the success of the university and the well-being of students. I observed that the culture was such that the vice-chancellor carried files to the faculty members and faculty members

carried files to the vice-chancellor contributing to a reduction in operational costs. According to a respondent:

> *"…I am very conscious, whenever I want to add a single person… because it adds to overhead costs… and we don't keep a fourth grade staff to carry a file like this. Maybe one or two administrative staff may be there but it is not a mushrooming rule. Therefore it is not important how many people are in the university. How you are giving quick response to the issues involved is what's important…"* (Respondent #151, Gramuco University, February 2015).

The respondent seemed to indicate that efficiency and productivity are important considerations for the university in providing impact (Abbott and Doucouliagos, 2003) rather than the creation of hierarchical structures that appear to be massively over-staff administratively as conceptualised by Jemielniak and Greenwood (2013) in relation to the current practices in contemporary universities. The practices at Gramuco demonstrated a spirit of cooperation among faculty and management in which the opinion of faculty members seemed to matter as expressed by a respondent "…we can give ideas to the vice-chancellor and he usually conducts staff meetings and he likes to get knowledge from different faculties… yes we do that kind of thing… he takes advice from faculty" … (Respondent # 165, Gramuco University, February 2015).

Meanwhile Batista College, the fourth case-study institution, is governed by a 30-member voluntary Board of Trustees (BOT). The vice president/chief executive officer occupies a sit on the BOT. Similar to Gramuco, students are not included on Batista's BOT as it is worth noting that they also do not have beneficial ownership title to the institution. A senior official mentioned that "students participate on every committee

of the college except the administrative committee which comprises all vice presidents". According to the respondent:

> *"Students are not on the Board of Trustees because these people have fiduciary responsibility for the college and students cannot have such responsibility …" (Respondent #3, Batista College, September 2015).*

The views of this respondent differ to a certain extent from those expressed by respondent #151 in the case of Gramuco University that "Students are not meant to take decisions for management". Respondent #3 seem to indicate that the responsibility of managing the trust on behalf of its beneficiaries (students) rests with the trustees and not students. The respondent also mentioned that students were not represented on the administrative committee which consisted of top senior officials of the institution and held responsibility for finance and internal management. The work of the administrative committee is operationalized by a number of internal committees that are accountable to the BOT and president of the college. While the system of governance at Batista does not include students on the BOT, they participate in shared governance on those other lower level internal committees that play key roles in influencing policies. This level of participation by students in lower level governance was explained by a student:

> *"…we do have students that take on roles of leadership in different dorms that speak to our concerns to the trustees and to different Boards. So we do have the ability to speak out and they listen, they will take it into consideration but depending on the issue and what it is specifically they weigh it…" (Student response No 4, Batista College, September 2015)*

Despite the absence of students on the BOT it was clear that students were central to that body because in the words of a respondent "many of the members of our board are alumnus and so they understand our students and they love our students, so they are very student-focused" (Respondent #14, Batista College, September 2015). The interests of students are represented by the Student Government Association (SGA) among faculty, administration and staff in conformity with the ideals of the college's Great Commitments. The SGA comprises the entire student body and facilitates student participation in campus government in its promotion of individual and group understanding of the responsibilities of democratic life. The SGA is represented on the General Faculty Assembly[25] by twelve student government officers. The office of president of the SGA is a paid position under the college's labour programme.

Batista has a total staff complement of 600 including ground workers on the farm and just over 130 full-time faculty members. At the head of the college is a president who reports to the Board of Trustees. About 90 per cent of faculty members are educated at the level of a doctoral degree. Of significance is that a number of senior employees are alumni who have returned to serve the college because of the transformative impact it has had on their lives. One senior executive informed me of walking out on an accomplished private career to give back to the college for changing his life for the better and that of his parents who had preceded him. According to this respondent "I can spend the rest of my life working and giving to Batista and I will never be able to repay what Batista has given to me…" (Respondent #20, Batista, College, September 2015). Other officials felt obligated to return to the college to offer their expertise, not

[25] Comprises 291 members and deals with non-academic affairs affecting the general welfare of Batista and fulfilment of its purpose. It includes all 154 members of the College Faculty Assembly.

because of any greater financial compensation, but because they wanted to serve the college and to help students succeed, having had the opportunity to do so themselves. In the words of a senior academic:

> *"… we come to Batista… I remember as a student I wanted to change the world and that immediately and I wanted to change the college. Batista changes each one of us more than we would change Batista. The idea is so powerful, the mission is so elegant that you can't help, but be changed, whether you are here for five days or five years or fifty years, the world would be a better place with more colleges like Batista…" (Respondent #15, Batista College, September 2015).*

The respondent's statement echoes several similar responses across the institution during my field visit which suggests the need for increased social equality (Archer, 2007), and concerns that governments in the UK and Australia (the focus of this research) have failed in their promise to provide increased social mobility for disadvantaged students through the welfare state (Barrigos, 2013). As a small inter-racial institution Batista is committed to racial equality through education (Baskin, 1990; Klarman, 2004) and aims to enhance social mobility by making it possible for poor students to access HE (Berry and Strong, 2016).

Financing

Public higher education institutions in the UK and Australia are described as non-profit institutions that operate in a current volatile economic climate where financial resources are seen to be scarce and their longevity depends on the identification of different sources of funds and a continuous inflow of income (Laville and Nyssens, 2001) to

fulfil their mission of service to society. For this reason these non-profit institutions have been associated with resource dependency theory (Cornforth, 2001; Hodge and Piccolo, 2005). Resource dependency theory asserts that the key to organisational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources by adapting to the requirements of important resource providers (Froelich, 1999; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). In other words, the theory views organisations as being interdependent with their environment for their resources and survival. The characteristics of non-profit organisations is that they do not engage in competition neither do they issue shares to investors. They raise funds for their operations and capital purchases through grants, donations, major fundraising activities, investments and retailing of goods and services (Carroll and Stater, 2008).

In more recent times however, government policies in the UK and Australia have promoted and encouraged competition among public higher education institutions (BIS, 2011; Marginson 2006) while significantly reducing the funding support for teaching and abolition of maintenance grants to students (Knowles, 2000; Dearden, Fitzsimons and Wyness, 2011). As a consequence public higher education institutions have opted for earned income and investments in an attempt to reduce their revenue volatility while maintaining financial stability and growth through diversification (Carroll and Stater, 2008). However, the growing commercialisation of public higher education institutions has become a major cause for concern (Weisbrod, 2000), notably where decisions are taken by senior managers who are not the residual owners and whose objectives differ from that of stakeholders. Critics argue that by marketising education public higher education institutions may undermine their legitimacy from rent-seeking behaviour and

cause a shift away from their mission (Frumkin and Keating, 2010; Dodds, 2011) which is to serve the public good.

The case-study institutions are diverse in their funding mechanism (See Table 6.3). Two institutions use their financial resources to finance the education of all students. Another institution subsidizes the education of students who are unable to meet the cost of their tuition fees and related costs, while the fourth institution uses part of its income to provide training to grassroots youth in the community. As an institution that is managed and controlled by its owners/members, Unity receives its initial income from the financial contribution of members towards the capital outlay. The larger part of the budget is from student fees. Twenty-five per cent (25%) also comes from technology and knowledge transfer as well as from non-competitive subsides made possible by the local government because of Unity's contribution to social development and to knowledge and technology transfer according to a respondent. Unity also receives a percentage of its income from competitive subsidies. The other sources of income are from annual contributions toward investment initiatives from the consortium of which the university is a member, from consultancies and from the conduct of research by faculty members.

Unity is research intensive and the consortium has 15 research and development centres while participating in 91 research and development projects in Europe. Its focus is on applied research in collaboration with companies that it partners with. According to a management official "we do not do research for the sake of doing so or to sit on a shelf…" (Respondent #110, Unity University, November 2014). The knowledge transfer is also beneficial to faculty staff and students who undertake research for the

companies and the additional funds generated by the institution helps to subsidize students who may not be able to finance their education. Another management official mentioned:

> *"…we do very little basic research. In fact our research groups cannot decide by themselves which research they need to be focusing on and this is an institutional agreement taking into account what are the demands and what might be the demands of the companies in the future. In order words research is driven by companies in general. It is a push rather than a pull model" (Respondent #108, Unity University, November 2014)*

Table 6.3: Funding Source of Case-Study Institutions

Institution	Sources of Revenue
Unity University	Tuition fees; technology transfer competitive subsidies; non-competitive subsidies; members contribution towards investment capital; annual contribution from the consortium; consultancies and research
Gramuco University	State government; students tuition; students accommodation costs
Batista College	Endowment fund; philanthropists; students accommodation and living costs; business investments; Federal and state grants
Davena College	Endowment fund; philanthropists; alumni; sale of produce and livestock

It is clear from the reflections of the respondents that the university depends to a large extent on industry to guide their research activities and applied research provides additional income since the institution is not publicly subsidised although its mission is said to be one that is socially oriented (Altuna, 2016). As a self-financing institution the respondent is of the view that there is greater utility in undertaking applied research

both for the university as well as for students enhanced career opportunities (Harman, 2001). Because the university works closely with industry the research that it conducts have immediate and clear implications for practice, as it is able to apply the little basic research that it conducts to solve industrial problems (Harman, 2001). Basic research as a more general field of knowledge does not always yield immediate financial returns and could sometimes be viewed as a commodity which once produced is in some meaningful sense placed "on the shelf" (Rosenberg, 1989:165) as alluded to by one of the respondents. There is however, empirical evidence to suggest that basic research does yield important social returns, albeit as a publicly funded activity (Salter and Martin, 2001).

Where the institution is managed and controlled by its members as is the case with Unity, Brayshaw (1992) argues that the likelihood of a possible conflict in objectives is eliminated. The solidarity among stakeholders can also create 'a capital of solid trust' thus restraining the potential for opportunistic behaviour (Laville & Nyssens, 2001). This is evidenced in Unity's policy decision that members share in whatever annual surplus is made by the university from its business activities with industry. A certain percentage determined by the membership at the annual general assembly is allocated towards the education fund as well as the reserve fund for sustainability of the university and for community development activities (Wright, Greenwood and Boden, 2011). This is one way in which the institution gives back to the community. In 2014 Unity had a reserve fund of over 100 million Euros (approximately £90m). Meanwhile, Gramuco receives its main source of revenue from the state government for operating costs and fixed assets because as mentioned by a respondent it is a primary

responsibility of the state government to look out for funds. According to the respondent:

> *"In this country they still believe that higher education should be funded by the government. Therefore, initial funds we are getting from the state government and later on we will be getting funds from the central government also. But it will be rooted through the state government"* (Respondent #151, Gramuco University, *February* 2015)

Gramuco is also financed by students' tuition fees and accommodation costs. What was made clear by the respondent is that the financing of higher education in India remains the remit of the state government which differs from the current trend in the UK and Australia in which the responsibility for financing higher education has been passed on to students (Johnstone, 2003). Students of Gramuco pay tuition fees of roughly £1,215 per student per academic year for undergraduate courses plus an additional £840 for accommodation costs which work out significantly less than that paid by students in the UK and Australia at the undergraduate level. The university also provides free training to members of cooperatives and grassroots youth in the society from a government grant in order to strengthen and develop the cooperative movement.

The original source of financing of the other two case-study institutions (Batista and Davena) was from an endowment fund which they continued to build over the years through re-investment in order to continue the support of a free tuition education or a full scholarship for all students and to cover operational costs. While no tuition fee is charged by these two institutions, alumni and philanthropists who share their ideals serve as a reliable source of finance through continuous donations. Income is also

raised from investments in other business activities. For instance, Batista receives income from an on-campus owned hotel. It also receives income from sale of produce grown on its farm and craft items (souvenirs; throw pillows, chair backs, brooms) made by students; federal and state grants for students and payments from students towards accommodation and living costs. The endowment supports approximately 74% of Batista's operating budget. In 2016, the college had an asset portfolio of $1.4 billion including an endowment fund of $1.1 billion.

Davena also receives additional income from the sale of produce grown by students on its 2500 acres of land and from cattle sales. Most food on the farm is grown for consumption by students and workers. The endowment supports 65% of the operating budget. It has been built by gifts from many supporters, in amounts ranging from a few hundred dollars to several million. Interestingly, unlike Batista College, Davena opted to receive no federal aid to support its students as it has elected to maintain its autonomy free from certain government regulations such as expected family contribution towards the education of students.

Similar to Unity University, students of Davena are beneficial owners of the college and they are integrally involved in many aspects of its management and control, thereby eliminating the likelihood of a possible conflict in objectives Brayshaw (1992). The college has no long-term debts that would adversely affect its liquidity and it is therefore in a position to continue to provide full scholarships to all students (Respondent #028, Davena College, September 2015). In 2015 it had a net worth of around $32m (approximately £25m) including an endowment fund of $23m (about £18m).

The next section is devoted to providing an account and discussion of the ways in which the case-study institutions have enhanced students' experiences. Students were all asked the following questions as contained in Table 6.4.

I will now address the third subsidiary research question which comprises the key part of the research focus on alternative HE institutional forms, to determine how the structure (ownership, governance, financing and organisation) of the case-study models have contributed to enhancing students' experiences. The findings from the focus group interviews will serve to illuminate the experiences of students' in terms of access and pedagogy. I will also discuss in this section some of the responses from faculty members and senior officials as well as my own observations during the fieldwork.

Table 6.4: Issues Raised with Students in the Focus Groups

What motivated you to come to this institution to study?
How do you finance your education and what do you think of the tuition fees?
Do you have to pay all your fees upfront or can you do so by instalments?
What is your experience so far at the institution? How do you find the studies and your own learning experiences?
What is your level of involvement on the governance body and how did you become a member?
How influential are you as students in impacting governance decisions?
Do students have a voice in designing the curriculum?
How involved are teachers in the pedagogy?
What would you say to someone wishing to come here to study and why?

6.4 Students' educational experiences in the Case-Study Institutions

Access to Higher Education

There has been much discourse around widening access to allow many more under-represented students the opportunity to gain entry into higher education (Burke, 2012). Governments in the UK and Australia have claimed that their educational policies have been purposefully designed to address the higher educational needs of that particular target group (DfES, 2003a). The contradiction is that while many more under-represented students are now attending higher education, the numbers getting into the most prestigious institutions are still very low when compared to students from higher socio-economic backgrounds (Blanden and Machin, 2004; Wyness, 2017).

Of even greater concern is that in Australia and the UK more specifically England (since Scotland, Wales and North Ireland still consider higher education a state responsibility), access to free HE has become a thing of the past and governments no longer believe that it is a responsibility of the state or a right of under-represented students to free HE, (BIS, 2011; Gale and Tranter, 2011). This policy decision forces those students who view HE as the gateway to social mobility and a better life to shoulder a heavy debt burden (Barrigos, 2013; Mc Gettigan, 2013) - a debt that has been proven to be more burdensome to these marginalised students than their financially better off counterparts (Belfield, et. al., 2017; IFS, 2017).

Embedded in the mission of three of the four case-study institutions in this research is the improvement of the socio-economic landscape and transformation of citizens of the

region in which they are located through education. The other institution aims to develop young people for a life of service to mankind through liberal arts education, self-governance and a compulsory work programme that is intended to foster discipline, work ethics and leadership qualities in students. All four institutions claim to provide students with a holistic and transformative education to make a difference in the lives of others and in the world. Three institutions also attract international students. Gramuco is the only institution that has not sought to recruit international students and this is because it is still a very young institution.

Importantly, Davena and Batista make higher education accessible and affordable by providing a full scholarship and a tuition-free scholarship respectively to all admitted students both local and international, thus easing the financial burden on these students and their parents, particularly in the case of Batista whose students are all from very poor backgrounds. All institutions except Davena are co-educational meaning that male and female students are educated together. Until recently, access to Davena College was open only to bright male students according to the manner in which one might have interpreted the founder's wishes in the Deed of Trust.

The absence of female students was an apparent observation during the conduct of my fieldwork and it would appear that it had become an imperative for Davena to become co-educational having received overwhelming support by the student body, faculty, management and alumni over a decade ago. However, some legal issues with the interpretation of the Trust had impeded progress. In June 2017 the institution was granted permission to open up access to female students, an important milestone which allows for diversity and inclusivity in the student body. Davena students gain access on

the basis of their high academic achievement regardless of their socio-economic status. A summary of students' experiences in the case study institutions is provided in Table 6.5.

Batista provides access only to poor students with high academic potential and whose families would have difficulty in affording the high cost of their education (Howard, 2001). The policy of the institution does not permit access to students from upper to middle income households who are able to afford the cost of their education regardless of their academic achievements. This policy was confirmed by a senior official, thus making it possible for many more under-represented "students to gain upward social mobility and break out of the cycle of poverty through higher education" (Howard, 2001:6). The tuition free scholarship offered by Batista has given hope to less-privileged students that their dream of a higher education was attainable considering that almost half of Batista's students are from households that make less than $16,000 per year (Howard, 2001) while the average household earnings is about $28,000 per year. A student expressed what it meant to be awarded a tuition-free education:

> *"…when I was looking at colleges, money was probably one of my top issues. I come from a background where it would be hard for me to attend like a big college. I would be in debt if I went there and then I wasn't going to go into debt and how should I pay it off; because being an education major, I am not going to be making like loads of money. So Batista was the financial thing… as well as the fact that I am not going to have to worry about paying off the debt" … (Student No.1 response, Batista College, September 2015.*

A parallel response was given by another student:

"…the finances played a huge role in my decision. I had applied to a college which is very high end as far as the cost and so… and then if my mom was going to pay for it, I couldn't ask her to pay more for something I could get here for less. The finances and the fact that it's a small school, I just bought into it" (Student No.4 response, Batista College, September 2015).

For the next respondent the choice of an educational institution was made after giving much consideration to the opportunity cost of continuing to volunteer her services to the community upon graduation or accumulating student loan debts:

Table 6.5: Summary of Students' Experiences in Case-Study Institutions

Unity	Gramuco	Davena	Batista
Students are members/co-owners		Students are beneficial owners	
Students involved in governance and management decision-making processes through a democratic process	Students not represented on the governance body but represented on the general council	Students involved in all aspects of governance, control and management decision-making processes through a democratic process	Students participate in governance on all internal committees except the Board of Trustees
Students represented on the academic board and student board	Students represented on the student board	Students represented on the academic board and student board	Students represented on the academic board and student board
		All students receive free tuition, boarding and lodging	All students receive a tuition free higher education
		Students graduate debt free	About one third students graduate with no debts; about two third students graduate with a debt balance of less than $6,000 which is lower than the national average of $29,000

Students study and work at the same time participating in a compulsory paid work programme and internships as part of the curriculum which assist with the educational expenses	Students participation in internships as part of the curriculum	Students study and work at the same time participating in a compulsory unpaid work programme as part of the curriculum	Students study and work at the same time participating in a compulsory paid labour programme as part of the curriculum which assist with their personal expenses
Students are protagonists of their learning Students conduct real research for companies thus developing their problem solving skills	Students involved in an employment enhancement programme Students visit different cooperatives and organisations to learn first-hand the internal operations of running a business	Socratic method of learning Students are co-producers of their education Students engage in weekly public speaking to develop their eloquence in addressing different audiences	The labour programme is integral to the curriculum in providing students with work-based skills and upon graduation they are awarded a work transcript and an academic transcript

> *"I applied to other schools that were further away and also had some other like progressive values, but they were $30,000 a year and they might give me scholarships, but I still would have had to go into a lot more debt and for me, I mean, I'd work volunteering for like non-profits before and if I don't go into debt now, then that means I can keep doing that after college and I don't have to take whatever job I can get. I can do one that matches up with my values, which is really important to me at least, that's my plan. So, the full tuition scholarship definitely makes a difference" (Student No.8 response, Batista College, September 2015).*

The evidence from the respondents above is telling and suggests that many poor students are not prepared to take on a financial responsibility that has been imposed upon them by policymakers, a situation referred to in the literature as being "debt averse" (Burdman, 2005; Jaschik, 2008; Monaghan, 2001), and this might affect students educational pursuit or choice of institution. Students who believe that a higher

education qualification is the gateway to securing their future with higher financial returns on their educational investment upon graduation, do so at the peril of amassing substantial debts (Baum and O'Malley 2003). They take out loans to pay for their education which was a concern for many of the students taking part in the focus group interviews and suggest that debt could have an inimical impact on students' educational experience (Cooke, Barkham, Audin, Bradley and Davy (2004). In a study undertaken by Callender and Jackson (2005), the authors conclude that students from low social classes were more "debt averse" than those from other social classes and were far more likely to be deterred from going to university because of their fear of debt (p. 509). This should however, be understood in the context that the former were starting off from a far riskier position than the latter and so their relationship to taking on debt must be contextualised in order to avoid the deficit construction of poorer students being debt averse as cited in this chapter, as a problem that they have brought upon themselves rather than an institutional problem.

In yet another study undertaken by Cooke, et., al. (2004), the writers argued that students with high financial concerns felt more 'tense, anxious or nervous' and found it more 'difficult getting to sleep or staying asleep' than students with low financial concerns (p. 11). These findings from the scholarly literature serve to reinforce the concerns expressed by respondents during my fieldwork that while loan repayment problems loom high, there is greater uncertainty of landing suitable jobs upon graduation. It also raise serious issues around existing inequalities and the responsibility of policymakers not only in widening participation (Burke, 2012) among that social stratum which this study seeks to address, but in ensuring that under-represented students are financially supported throughout their higher education.

In addition to making accessibility of HE possible for the type of students it attracts, Batista ensures that the additional cost borne by students for boarding and lodging is affordable (Barry and Strong, 2016) and where possible further subsidizes some of the additional costs if students are unable to meet the Expected Family Contribution (EFC)[26]. This commitment was expressed by a senior executive who indicated that: "students pay a small amount given the population that the institution serves … but while students are responsible for housing and meals many of them are so financially needy that very few students pay the entire amount for housing and meals" (Senior executive, Batista College, September 2015).

According to the senior executive, "*we also raise money annually that goes into the operating budget. In the case of international students, they do not pay room or board; they do not pay for housing and meals; they pay nothing essentially... We are serving intentionally the neediest but most academically promising students we can find, nationally and internationally" (Senior executive, Batista College, September 2015).* International students are awarded a full scholarship by Batista because they are not entitled to Federal government aid unlike national students who receive Federal aid to supplement their boarding and lodging based on their EFC. A student also communicated the following view point which was similar among many respondents regarding the impact of having to bear the cost of room and board and other personal expenses on their educational experience:

> *"…the additional costs that we pay for especially like the room and board and the meal plan, is based on your family income. So they're*

[26] A formula used by the US Federal Government to determine a student's eligibility for federal aid based on the family's financial position

> *mindful of the amount that they place in terms of what you can afford and I think that with the labour programme that we have here and the ability to receive additional financial aid, I think that it's definitely reasonable" (Student No. 1 response, Batista College, September 2015).*

It is clear that students of Davena and Batista viewed the ability to access higher education either through a full scholarship or tuition-free scholarship as an important achievement while being under no financial pressure to repay large amounts of debts upon graduation (Burke, 2012). This is in sharp contrast to the significant debts being borne by students (as customers) in contemporary higher education in the UK and Australia, and which has become a cause for concern (Newfield, 2008). Batista students graduate from a four year degree with no debts (Student 4 response, Batista College, September 2015) or with average federal loans of $7,000 according to the US Department of Education College Scorecard (2016) an annual mean of $1,750 compared to the national student average of $29,000. However, in these two case-study institutions in which there is a heavy focus on high academic achievers for obvious reasons, I argue that certain students who fall short of the high GPA entry requirement scores may not be able to gain access particularly if they are unable to finance their way at another institution.

Meanwhile, at Gramuco and Unity where students pay tuition fees and related expenses they gain access on their ability to pay and the entry qualifications. As previously mentioned, in the case of Unity students are hired to work half day in an affiliated industrial factory located on campus and they earn wages which help subsidise the cost of their education (Wright, Greenwood and Boden, 2011). Respondents at both

institutions were however of the view that the tuition fees were relatively high. The perspective of a respondent from Unity University follows:

> *"The university is very expensive when compared to the public universities in the region but because the university has a policy in place for students to work in the industrial factory and study this helps with the fees" (Student No.1 response, Unity University, November 2014)*

In the case of Gramuco this respondent had the following perspective:

> *"Tuition fees are too high as a government institution. It is 50,000 rupees (about £608). Accommodation is 60000 rupees per year. Some parents can afford to pay better than others. Only those who can afford the fees attend the university. If you don't have money you cannot come. There are other public traditional universities that are cheaper but this is the only type of university in the region" (Student No.5 response,* Gramuco *University, February 2015).*

Students of Unity University earn around 6,000 Euros (£5,540 equivalent) for the year from working in the factory and while this might not be sufficient to cover their tuition and other related expenses, the government also provides grants to students based on their economic situation while Unity equals the amount received by students from the government according to a respondent thus enhancing students experiences by making education more affordable. In the words of a senior official: "when the university was created the idea was that the town would not develop without education and it needed to have the best education for everybody". According to the senior official: "the idea is that everyone who wants to study here should be able to do so whether you have

money or not but also we are not a public university…" (Respondent #109, Unity University, November 2014). The claim by the respondent that Unity is not a public institution means that it is not subsidized by government (Wright, Greenwood and Boden, 2011) and has to identify its own revenue stream. It must be repeated that the university is privately owned by its members including students but it provides a service to the entire region in which it operates. Thus it charges students a reduced tuition fee to remain operational. The effective cost of undergraduate tuition fees at Unity should be around 9,000 Euros according to management but students pay 6,000 Euros compared to the private university in the region which charges 12,000 Euros according to a respondent. This means that the university absorbs the difference in cost between what students pay and the effective cost (Wright, Greenwood and Boden, 2011).

I posed the question: Has the university ever turned down any student who was willing to attend but did not have the financial means to do so? A management official provided this response:

> *"No… and we have it written in our mission in our contract so we will never do that. We will never be able to do that. Maybe there are some students who decide not to come because they feel that they won't be able to pay but if they come and if they ask I am sure we will find the way to make it possible" (Respondent #110, Unity University, November 2014)*

The above response suggest that Unity views education as a fundamental human right accessible to everyone in the community who is willing to commit to a course of study, that is, whether or not they have the financial resources to do so in keeping with its mandate of transforming the lives of people in its community.

Gramuco on the other hand, is the only case-study institution in which students pay the full cost of their education without financial support from the government or the institution itself and neither do they have a work programme to subsidize the cost of tuition fees. In the opinion of 90% of the students taking part in the focus group interviews, the tuition fees were too high for a government institution although respondents mentioned that the fees were revised downward by 16% of the original amount. This suggests that the institution had made some attempt to facilitate students' ability to pay.

Respondents were of the view that only those who could afford the fees gained access to the university. While respondents expressed that there were other public universities that were cheaper they confirmed that Gramuco was the only institution in the region that specialised in cooperative education. The university was however flexible in allowing students the option to pay their fees by instalments if they did not have the full amount upfront. A management official provided a perspective which supports the students' theory that only those who could afford the cost of their education were allowed access. According to the official:

> *"…all can join the university, but there will be no free education because we cannot provide free education; if we do then the burden will be too high. But those lower income groups, there is a lot of provision to get a scholarship from the state government… there are banks other than the civil banks that provide loans to students. So all types of people can come over here but I will be happy if the bottom people come …" (Respondent #151, February 2015)*

The official mentioned that the university was facilitating the process for students to access student loans from financial institutions at lower interest rates but proceeded to clarify that "the university will not be a guarantor for the students and this should not be…" (Respondent #151, Gramuco University, February 2015). During my fieldwork, Gramuco's management was proud to refer to the institution as heterodox. It must be recalled that Gramuco is a government owned institution. Based on my findings and observation, it operates along similar lines as traditional universities in the UK and Australia with the exception that it cannot yet be classified as marketised and commercialised as it is still in its infancy stages and its true impact is yet to be realised.

However the views expressed by Respondent #151 helped reinforce the concept of human-capital theory promoted by policy makers and which suggests that students should invest in their education, citing it as a personal investment that yields private benefits to students in the future in terms of financial returns and productivity (Fitzsimons, 2015; Mulongo, 2012; Paulsen, 2001). The assumption of human-capital theory is that the labour market works rationally and efficiently and that once students have developed certain human capital skills, the labour market will allocate them positions commensurate to those skills level *(*Deneulin and Shahani, 2009). Nevertheless Gramuco is committed to enhancing the public good by transforming and strengthening the cooperative enterprises in the region in which it operates through education.

Pedagogy

The massification of students and the growth of the knowledge-based economy have altered the traditional method of teaching (Sahlberg, 2004). Pedagogy based largely on classroom lectures and theoretical knowledge acquired from texts is proving to be insufficient to help students cope in the 21st century (Bentley, 2012). Students themselves seek an education that will prepare them for adulthood and to face the challenges of real life (Bentley, 2012). They also expect their HEI to provide them with knowledge and technical skills to cope in a dynamic knowledge-based economy (Lowden and., Hall, S., Elliot, D. and Lewin, 2011).

The quality and relevance of teaching in higher education has been called into question by many scholars (Bentley, 2012; Gacel-Ávila, 2005; Burke, Crozier, and Misiaszek, 2016; Morrison, Robbins and Rose, 2008) to reflect an education that is more socially responsive and that seeks to engage students as co-producers in the pedagogy while preparing them to be critical thinkers and transformational leaders in the world (Freire, 2014, 1994; Brown, 2004). This is despite the introduction of the Teaching Excellence and Students' Outcome Framework (TEF) in the UK and the Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) in Australia[27]. I now turn to the labour/work programme which is intrinsic to the curriculum of the case study institutions and for which the students are evaluated in one institution, in a similar manner as they would have if they were employees in a professional organisational setting.

[27] An assessment tool introduced by Governments of the UK and Australia to encourage excellent teaching in higher education institutions and which is intended to help provide students with choices in deciding on an educational institution, by providing information about teaching provision and student outcomes

Labour Programme: At three of the case-study institutions (Unity, Davena, Batista) students engage in a labour programme which forms a major part of their teaching and learning experience. The fourth institution (Gramuco) does not have a labour programme but students are provided with internships in different organisations as part of the curriculum. The labour programme is designed to provide students with practical work experience and soft skills alongside their academic courses as part of a holistic educational experience to give them a competitive edge in the world of work.

A highlight of the findings is that at all four institutions students ascribed high importance to the labour/work programme in enhancing their pedagogical and educational experience citing its practicality, whether it was through an internship in an organisation, working in every department within their educational institution or serving others within the community (See Table 6.6). It was evident that respondents viewed their educational experience as vital because not only did it provide them with requisite academic qualifications but it also developed in them, technical, leadership and soft skills to gain a competitive edge in the marketplace - the type of skills that are becoming far more valuable to hiring managers as argued by Brown, Hesketh and Williams (2004). Such was the perspective of this student:

> *"…we learn better and when we get a job we are already equipped with the technical knowhow and can easily adapt on the job unlike in most other universities where students have knowledge in theory only and are not able to perform on the job. So the practical knowledge from the university is an advantage and students will be able to repay their fees having received a sound education" (Student No.4 response, Unity University November 2014)*

Table 6.6: How Students Relate the Labour/Work Programme to the Pedagogical Framework and their Overall Educational Experience

Unity	Gramuco	Davena	Batista
Work is very practical	I like the **job attachments** because I am looking to get a job in a cooperative	Meeting with incredible people, having the **labour programme**, having fascinating and inspiring teachers	Money was one of my top issues and I would be in debt if I went to another college. I am not going to have to worry about paying off the debt
The university offers programmes that help students develop themselves and **prepare them for the world of work**	**Work is practical** and I want to start my own business	The idea of being isolated like a hermit or a monk who retreats for two years and then emerges completely changed kind of strike me like a romantic core	The **labour programme** especially the dedication to service aspect and how the college balances off the academic work and serving others
Proximity to where I live and they offer my field of interest	I want to be an entrepreneur	The romantic idea also struck me but coming here gave me an interesting perspective unto myself and my interactions, and civilisation overall… you just look at things in a very focused way	The financial aspect of not having to leave college with lots of debt
		My mum told me about it and I looked it up and saw it was interesting. That's how most people come here anyway by word of mouth	The finances played a huge role in my decision
			The professors and spirit of collegiality

In the words of another student:

> " *… students' always complete their studies with an internship whether at the university itself or another company so students have the opportunity to defend themselves and to demonstrate to the company what they are able to do"* (Student No. 3 response, Unity University, November 2014)

The respondents appear to have internalised the growing discourse which seem to suggest that students are not getting value for money (HEPI, 2017) and that a transformative educational experience involving theory and practice (Sterling, 2011) is important for a successful career path. This is a form of teaching and learning experience referred to by Freire (1970) as 'praxis', in which students practical experiences in the labour programme continue to shape their theoretical knowledge and conversely. The respondents' position is underscored by Bentley (2012) who argues that "there is considerable evidence that many young people are ill prepared for the changing world of employment" (p.17). Even more telling is Bentley's claim that "the current higher education system is failing to provide the preparation that young people need in order to thrive" (p.2).

Bentley's position is understood in the context that the marketization and commercialisation of contemporary HEIs as a means of institutional survival (Chow and Leung, 2016), has led to what DiMaggio and Powell (1983) refer to as institutional isomorphism as contemporary universities in the UK and Australia appear to imitate each other by offering a standardized and homogenised educational product (Sahlberg, 2004; Ishengoma, 2003) in competition for the same niche market (Vught, 2007), and appear to focus more on preparing students for exams instead of for the real world (Bentley, 2012). This next respondent claims that students of Batista College are receiving a holistic experiential pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Kolb and Kolb, 2009) in more meaningful ways than merely owning an academic credential:

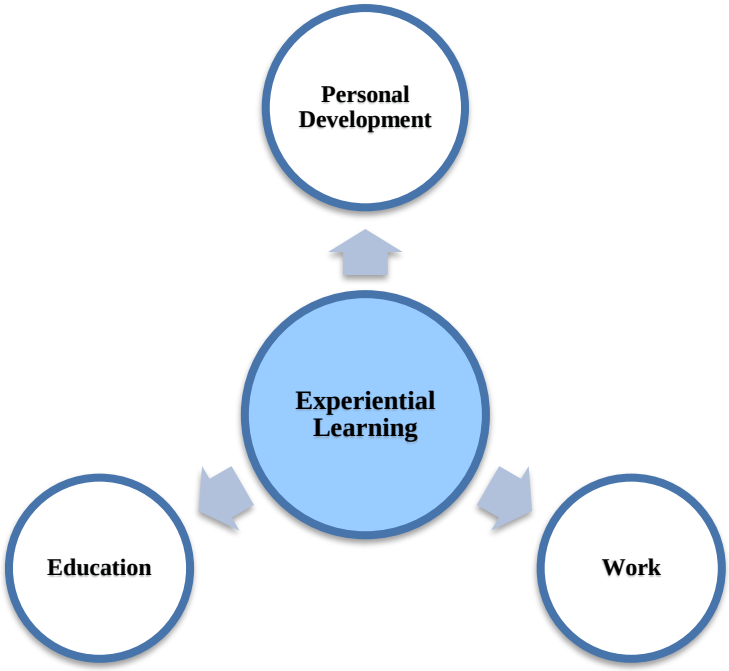
> *"I think the college has a lot of opportunities outside of the classroom that have also helped shape my experience here; not only is it very heavy in academics, it's given me leadership opportunities and work experience at*

> *the end… I think some of the opportunities that the college provides I would not have gotten at another institution, because of their dedication to their student body… They don't want us to leave as just a person with a degree. They want us to be a person that can make a difference in our own lives as well as other peoples…" (Student No. 1 response, Batista College, September 2015)*

According to Kolb and Kolb (2005) "experiential learning is a philosophy of education based on what Dewey (1938) called a theory of experience" (p. 193), that is, learning through experience. Kolb and Kolb refers to experiential learning theory (ELT) as a holistic theory that defines learning as the major process of human adaptation involving the whole person and is based on a four-stage cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstraction conceptualization and active experimentation during the learning experience (Fry and Kolb, 1979). ELT "draws on the work of prominent 20th century scholars such as Dewey, Lewin, Piaget, Freire among others, who emphasised the central and transformative role that experience plays in the learning process" (Kolb and Kolb, 2005:194).

Kolb 2015 depicts experiential learning as a process that links education, work and personal development as illustrated in Figure 6.6 and this relationship is consistent with the labour/work programme in the case-study institutions in which students are said to receive a holistic educational experience that contributes to their personal growth and development.

Figure 6.6: Experiential Learning: A Process Linking Education, Work and Personal Development



Adapted from Kolb 2015, p.4

The evidence provided by student 1 above, suggest that student 1, like students 3 and 4, is of the view that the practical work experience and soft skills are positional goods that will enable them to positively impact the world. The viewpoint of student 1 "that they don't want us to leave as just a person with a degree" is consistent with Brown, Hesketh and Williams' (2004) argument that the importance of academic credentials to employers is on a decline whereas personal attributes and skills are gaining increasing importance (cited in Tomlinson, 2008:4) to meet the demands of a knowledge-driven economy (Castells, 2001 in Tomlinson, 2008). This is because graduate credentials' in and of themselves are not considered as tools for measuring students ability to transfer theory into practice or to perform in the workplace (Tomlinson, 2008). The exponential increase in the number of graduates with academic credentials has created an even

greater awareness of the need for an education that position students and set them apart from the competition (Brown, Hesketh and Williams, 2004).

This is how a senior executive explained the role of one of the case-study institutions in enhancing students' experience: *"we are striving to educate students for a life time of learning and high quality life... we strive to know what corporations and employers want to see in our … graduates. We know what they say – they say communication, small group, work ethics, analysis, writing skills, problem solving… we are also a work college and every student here works 10-12 hours a week so they gain workplace employment skills and experience while they are a student and that helps many of our students I would say, do even better in the world of work" (Senior executive, Batista College, September 2015).* This perspective as well as those before seems to indicate that the wellbeing of the student is paramount because the reality is that they will be living and working in the world. Even more revealing is that some respondents referred to their educational experience as one that provided the environment and necessary support system to enable their success (Howard, 2001) and to encourage the fostering of strong interpersonal relationships, as the next respondent explains:

> *"I came here, because … the idea of self-governance and responsibility excited me, but most of all learning how to work with people broadly, and the kind of learning to work with people that you get from all three pillars, (learning, labour, self-governance) … now that I am here, I think, I'm still interested in learning like how to work with people, but also, the labour programme has become a lot more meaningful for me; academic has a lot*

more meaning for me …" (Student No. 036 response, Davena College, September 2015)

The common theme from these responses is the value students place on the practical work experience through the labour programme and personal self-development for aiding their future career prospects in a rapidly changing world environment as the next respondent explains:

> *"…most of the students want jobs. Management gives us opportunity for internships but is outside the community…we all live in the community. We are studying cooperatives and want to get jobs in that sector when we graduate because at one time cooperatives were vibrant in our region but now they are not doing so well and the university was established to help develop the cooperative sector…" (Student No. 6 response, Gramuco University, February 2015).*

A wider appeal of their educational experience as mentioned by some respondents was not merely the prospect of transitioning into the workplace upon graduation, but the opportunity provided by their institution to enrich the lives of others through community service. Such was the experience of the next respondent:

> *"…the thing that I fell in love with the most and which drew me to the college was the dedication to service that the college has and how it balances the academic work and service. I really wanted to spend my four years at a college that was dedicated to serving other people and that's what I got and I am very, very fortunate for that…" (Student No. 2 response, Baptista College, September 2015).*

In three case-study institutions (Unity, Gramuco, Batista) the responsibility for curriculum development lies with faculty staff. Three institutions (Gramuco, Batista, Davena) also appeared to have full control over their curriculum without outside interference but this has not restricted them from monitoring market trends to adequately prepare students for a life beyond higher education. Meanwhile Unity University works in partnership with businesses in the community in developing its curriculum. The university was established to respond to the needs of businesses in the community for technically skilled workers to effectively operate them thus contributing to the socio-economic development of the community according to a management official. The university's cohort of students comprises a large number of professionals from companies in the surrounding society who take up different courses of study. In one institution (Davena), students practice democracy in learning. Not only are they co-producers of their learning (McCulloch, 2009) but they have substantial control in deciding the curriculum and with some input by the College's president and dean, students participate in developing the curriculum as explained by this respondent:

> *"At the beginning of the year, we chose what subjects are going to be taught … the teachers gave proposals and we took whatever we thought were the most beneficial at this point or are most interesting and through the base we came to resolve what is going to be taught at the school. I personally found this … just an incredible experience because … no other institution allows you to say my teacher is going to teach me this. Professors get employed and based on the research, or … promises that they have to fulfil, they have to teach particular things and students have no say; but, by deciding what we are going to be taught through discussion, but also in class … can sort of decide the course of the conversation and decide the course of what exactly in the text will be focussed on and not the professor standing up and just having a one and*

> *half hour lecture, writing down everything he knows about a certain concept…. I think that, yeah that is really one of the best experiences I have ever had" (Student No. 6 response, Davena College, September 2015).*

The above perspective suggests that students seek more than merely absorbing knowledge passed on by their lecturers (Bovill and Bulley, 2011) which is consistent with what Freire (1970) refers to as the "banking" concept of education meaning that teachers view students as empty bank accounts into which academics make deposits. Clearly, the perspective of the respondent is that for learning to be meaningful, students see themselves as critical partners (Shor, 1996) and architects of their learning experience preferring to adopt a dialogical approach to the pedagogy. The active involvement of students at Davena College in curriculum development as provided by student 6 is also consistent with the discourses about active student participation in curriculum development (Furlong and Cartmel 2009; Wilkinson and Scandrett, 2003). The respondent's viewpoint further concurs with Rogers and Freiberg's (1994) claim that the active engagement of students in their learning experience is vital if learning is to be meaningful. According to the authors, by engaging students in their own learning this will encourage them to take responsibility within the learning process; a claim which echoes the views of the respondent above.

Nine courses are offered at Davena each year but writing and public speaking are the main courses on which students are evaluated. The pedagogy aims to develop students' leadership skills and oratorical prowess and to give them a broad education that strengthens the way that they think in critical terms. Students engage in weekly public speaking to an audience of professors, staff and students and their performance is

evaluated by professors and peers. They are graded on two speeches per semester and they prepare 20 written evaluations of each other a year over two evaluation cycles as a requirement of the Re-invitation Committee (the committee that re-invites their peers to proceed to the second year). I observed students as they participated in one of their public speaking sessions and the level of presentation and articulation of ideas were of a very high standard and far exceeded expectations of students at a junior college. Students are also deeply committed to their education and this was clearly visible during the conduct of the research when I had to be innovative at times to get an interview because of the discipline of students and their very busy schedule juggling their academic classes and the labour programme. A faculty member provided an opinion of his experience with students in the classroom:

> "*I taught at a lot of institutions in my twenty-five years of teaching…but with one possible exception, I never met students that are so purposefully engaged and intelligent and interested, and they really are extraordinary. So it's just a joy to teach here and the place has a certain life…" (Respondent #026, Davena College, September 2015).*

A Socratic method of teaching dominates the small classroom sizes at Davena. Professors merely act as facilitators, providing guidance and helping to develop students intellectually. Questions are thrown out and answers provided to facilitate deep classroom discussions and critical thinking (Breiseth, 1983). The ability of students to actively take charge of the learning process guided by faculty members contributes to a change in top-down power relations (Bovill, 2013; Brooman, Darwent and Pimor, 2015) or the traditional teacher-led mode of teaching (Skidmore and Murakami, 2016)

and is exactly how the founder intended it to be when he penned in one of his famous letters to the student body, that "the teacher's duty was to guide and to develop the student but not to attempt to reconstruct him on artificial lines" (Davena's Constitution, February 17, 1923). A faculty member shared some thoughts on the ability of students to be active participants and protagonists of their learning (Elen, Clarebout, Léonard, and Lowyck, 2007; Taras, 2002)

> *"…the students here are very keen and they take a lot of responsibility for their class themselves. So, where I come from, my students were not like that generally… they're all nice kids* but *are much more passive, I lectured there but I don't do that here simply. I will start out a class maybe for 20 or 25 minutes, or half an hour the most. Give a little presentation on say one of the youth cantus of the comedy and then I'll ask a question and boom, we open up for discussion and they are more than capable of pursuing themes, you know, delving into the text with a little bit of prodding in one direction or another from me, and it goes quite well, and, it's over in an instant. I just wish we had more time…" (Respondent #23, Davena College, September 2015).*

Similar to Davena, students of Unity University are also protagonists of their education. It means that they work on projects in which they have an interest and for which they can claim ownership (Altuna, 2016) while teachers facilitate that process through classroom discourse (Cazden, 2003). The pedagogy is student centred (Elen, et. al., 2007) involving problem-based learning in which students 'learn by doing' and they develop the type of competency based skills and other soft skills that are widely demanded by companies. According to a senior official:

"…we like to say our studies are very practical so every year each student has to do an attachment with a company where they do a real project in a company so we need to have very close relations with companies so they take our students. It is good for them also because they do not pay much. But students are helping the companies to solve a problem by working on a real project. We are partnered with over 500 companies because we want to put students close to a company where they live so we have relations with many companies. We ask many companies what their needs are. What the students' lack of….our relationship with the companies is mostly in the region in which we operate…" (Respondent #108, Unity University, November 2014)

At the beginning of the first school year students get into groups and create a small company. Classes are very practical and the classroom layout models that of a corporate meeting room according to a respondent. Because the university works so closely with companies in the society on research and knowledge transfer, students are presented with challenges and problems affecting real companies and they work collaboratively through discussions, debate and research to solve these organisational problems. Lecturers facilitate the process of learning by providing guidance to students in the form of coaching and feedback. This approach to teaching and learning was favoured by students as it enabled them to become independent thinkers and to develop problem-solving skills. According to a student:

"Teachers are very accessible even after working hours. They provide guidance and take a personal interest in the students' life even outside the university. Students work independently quite a lot and receive guidance. Example, the teacher asks questions but students come up with the solutions and solve their own problems. They like this teaching style…" (Student No. 1 response, Unity University, November 2014)

According to a management official, "s*tudents do a lot of problem-solving exercises. Every year they travel overseas on a learning journey. In the first year they travel to a European country where they contact companies and have meetings with directors of companies. In the second year they go to Asia to see the different company models. Unity also has some partners there; and in the third year the students travel to Silicon Valley to visit big companies like Apple and they have meetings with directors and learn about the operations of these companies…" (Respondent #110, November 2014)*

This approach to the epistemology of the classroom (Skidmore, 2006) as provided by the respondents demonstrates that lecturers do not necessarily control what knowledge is produced but the students are the producers of knowledge (Neary and Winn, 2009; Taylor and Wilding, 2009) through a dialogic relationship (Skidmore, 2006) among groups of students and between students and lecturers. The pedagogical style translates into practical experiences and solutions to organisational problems which empower students and they are formally evaluated jointly between the university and company(s). Unity's dialogical learning aims to develop values, work ethic and attitudes in students, using a problem-based learning approach, thus enabling them to successfully integrate in the professional world and become active subjects in the progressive transformation of society (Atzeni, 2012). Because students work with companies in solving real organisational problems, there are direct opportunities for enhancement of their educational experiences as many are offered employment contracts by the companies upon graduation according to respondents.

In the case of Gramuco University what differentiates the epistemology in the classroom is the practical approach to the pedagogy. Students undertake field trips to

organisations and cooperative enterprises in the community and are provided with internships as part of the educational programme. They conduct in-depth review and analysis of the organisation during one trimester on which they are assessed. Like Unity University, Gramuco also aims to observe trends in the business environment and equip students with the right skillsets for the labour market (Fallows and Steven, 2000; Raybould and Sheedy, 2005) because the reality is that some students will seek to work in industry upon graduation.

An employability enhancement programme (EEP) was incorporated into Gramuco's curriculum and this was slated to commence the year following the research. The EEP when started would seek to bridge the skillset desired by the corporate world and the skillset of students. Acquiring the necessary skillset for employment was clearly communicated by all students during the focus group interviews. In addition to its formal curriculum Gramuco takes its pedagogy into the community by providing free training to individuals as part of its commitment to enhancement of the public good (Marginson, 2011; Singh, 2001). In 2015, the university had already provided training to more than 2000 rural persons on the ground. The university also provided capacity building assistance to members of cooperative enterprises in order to strengthen the cooperatives and to assist young persons to start businesses of their own.

Batista is a liberal arts college that claims a transformative education through a fusion of its academic courses, compulsory labour programme and community outreach programmes. The educational programme is built on the pillars of learning, labour and service to community and to others, and engenders Batista's great commitments. In keeping with its diversity of cultures, the college engages students in an annual

education-abroad programme with the aim of providing students a multicultural and international perspective and to foster mutual respect and tolerance of each other consistent with the college's motto.

Batista's students are from less-privileged backgrounds and in some cases they hail from homes with a myriad of social problems. Thus the needs of students are central to the institution. Management encourages a culture of engagement by connecting with students on a personal level in and outside the classroom. The institution has put in place support structures to reach out to students and to re-engage them before it's too late if a student is constantly absent from classes. According to a faculty member: "*when students connect directly with people they tend to stay at an institution in higher proportions than if they don't and so I have taught at a couple other institutions and I would say that Batista gives our students a lot more personalised attention...*" (Respondent #23, Batista College, September 2015).

The claim by respondent #23 was a common theme expressed by others throughout the research. It seems to suggest that in many ways the success of Batista's students stood at the core of its mission. A faculty ratio of 10:1 further encouraged the individual attention received by students and contributed to enhancing their educational experience. In the words of a student: "… *you get to know the professor and there are times when, like if you say you are sick one day from class, the professor is going to be able to point out you are sick and they are going to be able to reach out to you and be like, hey, you okay, and it just then makes things a lot easier and you're not just a number, you are actually a student*…" (Student No. 4 response, Batista College, September 2015).

Apart from providing all students with a tuition free scholarship, students receive a free laptop as part of Batista's implementation of its digital technologies, which they get to keep upon graduation. This is intended to help students make full use of the resources that the 21st century information society offers (Bentley, 2012).

The labour programme discussed earlier is intrinsic to students' learning based on the founder's moral persuasion of 'dignity in all work'. The labour programme complement the workforce and students are required to work 10-12 hours a week in 116 paid labour positions on campus and in community service programmes. Students volunteer their services in the community working in non-profit organisations, and with community leaders to address the needs of the community. They advocate for social justice and also mentor other young people in the community. They feed the elderly and assist with shelter for the homeless by participating in the construction of low income houses. This approach to the pedagogy helps students demonstrate leadership capabilities and develop effective writing, speaking, critical thinking and research skills that are essential prerequisites for a life beyond higher education (Heckman, and Kautz, 2012).

A significant aspect of the work programme is that students' performance is formally evaluated against seven key criteria (attendance, accountability, teamwork, initiative, respect for others, learning and position specific duties), similar to employee evaluation in any formal workplace. In the labour programme, supervisors assign scores on the formal 'Student Labour Evaluation Form' and provide feedback to help students improve their labour performance. Upon graduation, students receive a formal academic transcript, and a labour transcript (Strong-Leek and Berry, 2016) with the college's official seal, outlining their work history and 'performance descriptor' (e.g.,

exceptional performance, needs improvement), thus signifying its authenticity to a potential employer.

6.5 Limitations of Case-Study Institutions on Students' Experiences

Despite the positive experiences provided by students, the four institutions are not utopian and there were a few policy issues and practices highlighted by students which could serve to undermine the richness of their experiences: These practices centred round a pedagogy of theory combined with practice. The common thread was that it is an all-consuming educational experience and it will push students to their limit. Students were of the opinion that there was need for a balance since they did not have enough time to follow up on their own interests outside of the framework of the institution because so much time is invested in taking care of their responsibilities in the labour programme.

In one institution students mentioned that requiring changes to policy was a very slow process because of the fact that staff and students were overwhelmed and they did not have sufficient time to take remedial action. At one institution though, students mentioned that the university was seeking to allot credit for work related studies. Students of one institution expressed concern about the institutional policy in which they were forced to attend general classes (specifically in the first year) that were selected by the institution but which were unrelated to their majors and for which they had no interest. According to them they would have preferred to utilise the time more wisely to focus on their majors. Finally in one institution it was expressed that staff of

the Writing Centre needed to be sufficiently trained to deal with students who had learning disabilities.

Notwithstanding these limitations all students participating in the focus group interviews provided the following reasons why they would highly recommend their institution to prospective students:

- If you study here you acquire skills that I cannot see happening in other places and students take on the practical work seriously (Student No. 5 response, Unity University, November 2014)

- It provides students with a broad education that strengthens the personality of students, and how they think about life in critical terms…the traditional HEI would not prepare us for the world as we are being prepared here (Student No. 2 response, Davina College, September 2015)

- We love it here. It is a wonderful place to be and it will push you to your limit and drive you insane but in the end you feel much better off for it (Student No. 1 response, Batista College, September 2015)

- I speak about it all the time. I know it is not for everyone. I would recommend it to people who really want to make change in some kind of way in the world (Student No. 3 response, Batista College, September 2015)

Finally I asked students the question: what do you think about alternative university models in which students and faculty participate in governance: The responses of two students are provided:

- *"I believe that there are things at Davena in a pedagogical way are beautiful and that not only make for better education, but for better educational communities for the people who live in them. But it is a hard thing to replicate"* (Student No. 6 response, Davina College, September 2015)

- *"I wonder whether an alternative model can work in a large scale university and at a place where financial issues are not as good as Davina but I would really like to see many more places like this offered. I think the reason why a lot of under-privileged students don't really get into HE is because they are disassociated from sitting in a classroom looking at a board for like many hours and going outside of the classroom and just sitting down and studying for at least 20 hours. I know a lot of people would never do that and I think that by bringing together the aspect of labour and really taking care of your own institution and the place you live in…; combining this with academics and drawing on your own experiences can really help a lot of students in the world to think ahead…. Yes, I would also like to see the Davena model applied in different places and I hopefully, can even implement that change in some ways"* (Student No. 5 response, Davina College, September 2015)

6.6 Summary

Among the case-study institutions Unity, Davena and Batista offer a distinctive educational experience. Unity and Davena are run by students, faculty and staff who appear to work collaboratively together for the benefit of students. Unity is a member-owned higher education institution whose members have legal rights of governance and control of their institution through a democratic process of one member one vote while students of Davena have beneficial ownership title of the College and the right to self-governance taking strategic decisions in partnership with the trustees and through a democratic process for the benefit of current and future students.

Batista and Davena enhance the student educational experience by enabling them to access HE at little or no cost to them. Batista promotes social justice issues by transforming the lives of students who otherwise would not be able to rise above their socio-economic situation regardless of racial diversity. It does so by providing a tuition-free education only to under-represented students. The institution directs all its resources to educate, coach, nurture and develop these academically promising young people holistically, thereby instilling in them the prospect of hope for a more promising future.

At all institutions the pedagogy is based on experiential learning (Kolb and Kolb, 2005) in which students follow a rigorous curriculum of theory and practice that provides them with a holistic educational experience - academic knowledge in addition to equipping them with technical and soft skills as well as leadership experience through involvement on various committees. At Davena and Batista, students complement

permanent staff through the labour/work programme. This facilitates a reduction in overhead costs and enables the institutions to direct more of their financial resources to provide access to students.

The involvement of students in leadership is more pronounced at Davena College in which students democratically self-govern, assuming major decision-making authority on issues of curriculum development, admission of new students and re-invitation of fellow students to the next academic year as well as the recruitment of faculty. For students of Batista College and Unity University their participation in the institution's work programme does not only provide them with much needed work experience for life but they are paid wages to offset any financial expenses while they are enrolled at the institution.

The labour programme is a form of pedagogy that is intrinsic to the curriculum at Unity, Batista and Davena and facilitates the smooth transition of students from collegiate life to careers in the world of work and service to community. At Gramuco, Batista and Unity students are also given the opportunity to take up internships organised by their institutions thereby honing their skills and talents and using the knowledge acquired in the classroom and throughout the labour programme to help solve business problems. Thus the type of experiential learning provided by the case-study institutions was very practical, hands-on, and sought to develop work ethics, values, discipline and interpersonal relationships among students as they construct knowledge in their social or cultural environment in and out of interaction with each other. This type of pedagogy also helped to develop leadership skills and to foster a sense of community spirit in which students contributed to the society by helping in their communities – working

with young people and the elderly – thus gaining an appreciation of service to community. Students also contributed to their educational institutions by providing assistance to faculty and administrative staff thereby polishing their skills through 'concrete experience' and 'reflective observation' (Kolb and Kolb, 2005).

The deep personal commitment of faculty members to students' well-being at the four case-study institutions also contributes to the students' pedagogical experience while the low student-faculty ratio at Batista and Davena allows for more individual attention and better learning according to students taking part in the focus group interviews. A Socratic method of teaching defines Davena's pedagogy, contributing to the core subjects of writing and public speaking. Davena, Batista and Unity are internationally recognised institutions for the high quality of their education and contribution to the region that they serve.

In the next chapter I present a set of resources that could be drawn upon imaginatively for the development of heterodox forms of HEIs ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure. I also discuss the significance for policy and for higher education reform.

Chapter 7

An Idea whose Time has Come
Significance for Policy and for Higher Education Reform

7.1 Introduction

With so much uncertainty surrounding the future of the orthodox higher education system, the proposed heterodox forms of higher education institution ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure is ‘an idea whose time has come’ (Victor Hugo, 1852 in Joerges, 1999: 420). As mentioned in Chapter 1, I set out in my research to explore theories, models, concepts and practices of social economy enterprises along the axes of ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure in order to construct a body of 'resources for hope' (Kenway, Boden and Fahey, 2014), a kind of resource kit, which might be deployed for the development of different organisational forms for HEIs. Because social economy enterprises are culturally and contextually specific, no single model will suit all needs. Hence my approach, in this chapter, has been to develop this resource kit in a way that allows for the construction of heterogeneous and heterodox solutions. The heterodox form is not intended to replace contemporary higher education institutions but to serve as an alternative model for enhancing students’ educational experiences in terms of access and pedagogy.

My search for heterodox forms of universities has led me to consider among three possible alternatives, as I scouted the world in search of ‘spaces of hope’. These are a multi-stakeholder cooperative higher education institution, a trust model or a hybrid of

a cooperative and trust. As I discussed in my auto-ethnography in Chapter 1, HEIs have moved swiftly into the adaptation of a neoliberal market model that is based on competition, commodification, and mass recruitment of students mainly for economic purposes. Of greater concern is that this phenomenon has resulted in an unprecedented number of young students now saddled with educational debt, reinforced by government education policies. While under-privileged students may have made a small breakthrough in the HE system, they are still widely under-represented. They are also being squeezed out from accessing HE and the realisation of a pathway to a more promising future, as a result of the high purchasing cost of education and the uncertainties of a comparable job prospect upon graduation (Mourshed, Farrell and Barton, 2013). It is my expectation, that the proposed heterodox HEI form could provide a semblance of hope to the under-privileged, that a 'better world is possible' and that their educational needs could be enhanced with the award of free education. This chapter will answer the subsidiary research question:

- What alternative models of ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure might be constituted into new higher education institutional forms and how might these enhance students' experiences?

Before presenting the proposed heterodox model, I will briefly reintroduce the cooperative concept and the trust business models. Cooperative enterprises and member-owned trusts organisations promote democratic governance and values of social justice. A trust organisation provides guaranteed initial financial capital to its beneficiary members for the purpose of undertaking or continuing to promote a socially beneficial business activity such as education. The International Cooperative Alliance,

which consists of more than 800 million members, helps to create a more supportive political, legal and regulatory environment for cooperative enterprises worldwide through advocacy at the level of policymakers.

In many parts of the world including Australia, there have been separate cooperative legislation and regulations in place to protect the interest of members and governments have established a regulatory department, headed by a registrar of cooperatives to ensure prudent business practices are adhered to in accordance with the cooperatives act and regulations. The day to day operations of cooperatives are guided by the individual cooperative's bye-laws. In the UK, cooperatives were registered under the Companies Act for a number of years, "even though the regulation of commercial entities was framed in a way that promoted capitalistic enterprise rather than the cooperative effort" (Cracogna, Fici and Henrÿ, 2013:208) that cooperatives are noted for. It was as recent as 2014 that the Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies Act was promulgated in the UK to regulate these social economy enterprises. This is despite the fact that the cooperatives concept was conceived in England by the Rochdale Pioneers in 1844 as a struggle against the logic of capital accumulation by agents of capitalism (Satgar, 2007).

In their analysis of Mondragon Corporation, a successful federation of cooperatives including a cooperative university, Wright, Greenwood and Boden (2011) posited that these co-operatives significantly outperform other kinds of businesses in economic downturns, giving them a significant overall competitive advantage. According to Wright et al. (2011), the cooperatives are demanding to create and manage, but they 'work'. The writers argue that if this business model is not more widespread, it is

perhaps because people in management positions in other organisations demand much higher remuneration than the co-operatives are willing to provide and because co-operative capital remains under the control of its members, averting the exploitation of workers by predatory lenders and neoliberal managers (p.43). The conclusion drawn by Wright et al. (2011) is that it is possible to create and manage successful universities that do not involve the exploitation of faculty as passive employees and the treatment of students as mere customers in a fee-for-service educational scheme. The argument advanced by these writers is consistent with the findings of this research.

The cooperative philosophy is also defended by Rheannon (2012) as 'the next best thing', denouncing capitalism and citing the failure of the housing market, the stalling job market and the failed austerity programs that are rewarding bankers but sinking economies deeper into the doldrums as a dysfunctional system. While it is often those persons located in the lower strata of the society who have started these democratically controlled enterprises such as farmers, fishermen or consumers, cooperatives have evolved over the years and according to Cracogna, Fici and Henrÿ (2013), their membership now include persons from different socio-economic status within the society. They have demonstrated a credible history as sustainable and successful enterprises that play major developmental roles socially and economically (Majee and Hoyt, 2011).

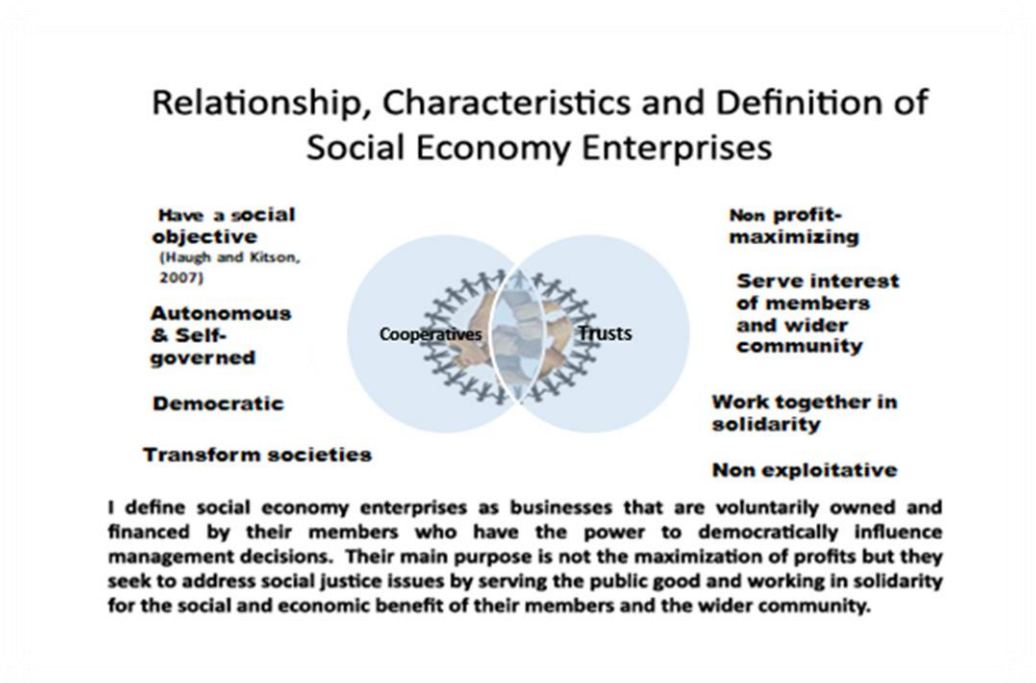
Boden, Ciancanelli and Wright (2012) proposed the creation of trust universities based on the model of the John Lewis Partnership as alternatives to the neoliberal forms that currently exist in the UK. The writers argue that this model would make universities irrevocably part of the knowledge commons, vest beneficial ownership and control in

students and all employees and help prevent excessive managerial predation (p. 16). Cato and Heatley (2012) have also been supportive of a trust model for a university but they question the ability to which such a model could help reduce students' fees. The findings of this research as contained in Chapter 6 addresses Cato and Heatley's concerns because students in two of the case-study trust higher education institutions pay no tuition fees. The funding model of the two case-study institutions in the US was originally made possible because of the existence of an endowment fund by the founders.

Boden, et al. (2012) argue that a trust university would ensure that current partners cannot self-interestedly deny benefits to future partners by selling off the firm. They claim that in contrast, cooperative and mutual ownership organisations can suffer this fate for personal profit and cited the demutualisation of building societies in the UK as an example. The writers provided no evidence to substantiate this claim among cooperative enterprises. As mentioned previously in this chapter, cooperative enterprises in many jurisdictions are protected under legislated cooperative acts and regulations separate from company acts and they are regulated by a cooperative regulatory authority. Cooperative enterprises, like the trust organisations mentioned in this thesis, are owned and controlled by their members who have vested interest in the business. Thus the nature of cooperative enterprises similar to John Lewis Partnership is the perpetual succession of their members. Decisions of these enterprises are taken through a democratic process of the members thus mitigating against abuses of power or the possibility of any one member or a few members selling the cooperative business enterprise for personal gain.

A trust HEI based on the John Lewis Partnership concept is an interesting proposal that could work, provided that a trustor is identified and as long as mechanisms are put in place for a continuous inflow of funds to sustain the trust HEI. Figure 7.1 provides a definition of social economy enterprises proposed for the heterodox higher education institution model and their distinguishing features.

Figure 7.1



7.2 The Proposed Heterodox Higher Education Institutional Model

This research has advanced on the premise that the marketisation of universities, and the associated deregulation by government, somewhat ironically, opened up the space and created opportunities for higher education to adopt radically different institutional forms – new imaginaries – some of which might help to develop types of HEIs that will address the problems of access and approaches to the pedagogy thereby enhancing students' experiences.

The proposed heterodox model is one with different characteristics from the orthodox model as illustrated in Table 7.1. The proposal is for a model that will be unorthodoxically owned and operated with the collective involvement of students, academics, workers and key stakeholders in strategic decision making, while having the independence of accreditation through the appropriate degree awarding authority in the respective country in which the model is located. The model will be open to affiliated partners, alumni and honorary membership including retired academics and interested persons who identify with the mission and who desire to contribute their technical expertise or financial resources.

The model being proposed in this thesis is a hybrid between a cooperative and a trust to maximise the possibility of raising the initial capital outlay and ongoing financial resources needed for this project. Because of the population size and economic climate in some jurisdictions, cooperative enterprises on their own may not be financially sustainable hence, the proposal for a hybrid formula in a wider regional context. For any organisation or institution to operate efficiently there will be the need for some form of structure and this is proposed with less managerial levels and greater integration of the partnership.

Purpose

The purpose of the proposed heterodox HEI is to enhance the educational experiences of students in terms of access and pedagogy. It will also provide students from historically under-represented backgrounds with free higher education. The framework in Figure 7.2 represents the composition of the power authority of the heterodox higher

Table 7.1: The Orthodox HEI Forms versus the Proposed Heterodox HEI Forms

Orthodox	Heterodox
Management controlled	Worker and student owned
Universities aligned to knowledge economy for employable graduates	University network with employers for the benefit of students
Universities run on a business model; top down management	University as a social model with democratic governance and participative management
Have become producers/suppliers of human capital	Development of holistic individual - students learn and work in the institution gaining useful leadership and other skills to become leading members of the complex knowledge economy
Provides industry with economically exploitable knowledge	Produces knowledge to benefit society
Higher education repositioned as a private good	Higher education for the benefit of all by serving the wider region within which the university operates and empowering young people
Diminished authority of academic staff	Academics as partners
Students as customers (must pay for their education)	Students as active partners; they are integrally involved in the decision making process.
Transactional relationship between university/faculty and students and less so a commitment for their personal development	Partnership between faculty and students with vested interest of faculty
High tuition fees	Addresses social inequalities - low tuition to no tuition
Increased competition, marketisation of education services	No need for competition
Students under pressure to get the right jobs (cost/benefit analysis)	Equip students with the skills and knowledge to impact the world positively
Access and affordability leads to indebtedness of students	Access for all - reduced student indebtedness
Standardised curriculum	Curriculum developed with students
Overcrowded lectures and class sizes	Controlled lectures and small class sizes
Deterioration in teaching quality	Consistently high quality teaching

education institutional form. The framework is a continuous and unbroken circle which portrays unity of purpose among the different sub-systems. It is intended to demonstrate that there is no one 'sub-system' with ultimate authority but the sub-systems come together to form a unitary entity known as, the heterodox higher education institution involving the general membership/stakeholders in all decision making processes. The small red circle is the nucleus of the framework. It is the shared purpose or common goals that binds the membership together in solidarity.

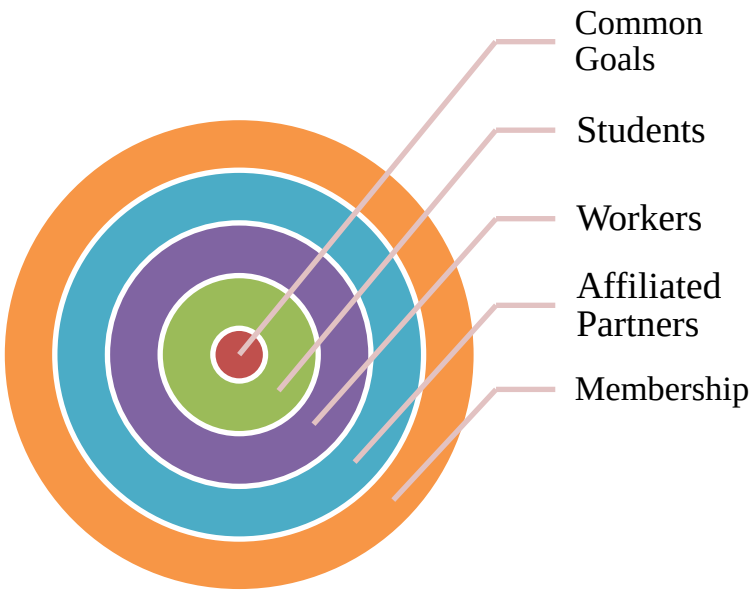


Figure 7.2: Conceptual Framework for Heterodox HE Institutional Forms of Ownership/Control, Governance, Financing and Organisational Structure

The model will be accessible to all students from the region where the institution is located and overseas, particularly students from historically under-represented groups in the region because the intention is to work towards providing a collective good and enabling access to students who demonstrate an interest in working together to develop the region in which the university operates. In terms of capacity the model can only grow if it is properly financed, which will be addressed in the succeeding paragraph,

but the need to attract students should be opened up to a wider spectrum beyond its local community and this is why it is being proposed that ownership/membership be extended to trusts, worker owned organisations, cooperatives, mutual and any social economy organisation that covers the entire region (and not just the community) within which the heterodox higher education institutional form is located. In this way, the institution may be able to grow in capacity and to continuously attract professional students from within its affiliated member organisations as well as students on a regional (and international) scale.

Financing

Sustaining the model is essential and an on-going source of finance will have to be maintained. One possible option is identifying a trustor who would be interested in supporting the cause. The funds would then be held in trust for the benefit of financing the education of students who do not have the financial backing/means to do so themselves. Other options are annual subscriptions from affiliated partners within the wider region and contributions from philanthropists. Because this model will not be based on a market economy, that is to maximise profits for shareholders, an education reserve fund will be set aside to assist those students who lack the financial resources to pay for their education. A percentage of surplus funds of the HEI could be invested in less risky investment vehicles (government and municipal bonds). The aim is to help build the portfolio for sustainability of the model so that it can contribute positively to society and continue to extend its service of a full scholarship education to as many under-privileged students as there are funds available.

Students who are able to finance themselves will be required to make a small tuition contribution but the amount will be managed so that they do not have to carry a debt burden upon graduation. Affiliated partners will be required to pay a fee towards the training of their workers. Because the model is seeking to provide and maintain a high quality of education and to attract qualified academic staff even from among the membership, it is anticipated that academic staff will be paid a salary (not necessarily market value) if they are to dedicate their time fully in shaping the future of students.

These are all policy decisions that will be discussed among the wider membership for consensus before implementation. A funding committee will be established with the responsibility to identify resources for the on-going operations of the HEI. The business community will be identified as one possible source of finance. This is important because they are the ones most likely to directly benefit from the large cadre of qualified and professionally trained graduates. For this reason they will be encouraged to make an annual financial donation towards the sustenance of the model.

The model will remain sensitive to the changing needs of the economy in which it operates and may seek to consult businesses to monitor trends and to best prepare students with the necessary skills to make a positive contribution to their community and the society at large.

Pedagogy and Curriculum

The world is changing rapidly, and like it or not, we are living in a knowledge-based economy and one in which technology now impact the lives of everyone. The proposed

heterodox model will adopt a pedagogy that is both intellectually stimulating and very practical in nature. The purpose is to provide students with a holistic educational experience to become effective problem solvers and change agents in a rapidly changing world, as they learn by doing (Breiseth, 1983) with the support of faculty staff. The large lecture theatre approach to teaching is discouraged in the heterodox model as studies have shown that it is less likely for students to learn in such impersonal environments (Astin, 1993 cited in Kezar and Kinzie, 2006:149). Thus, interaction between faculty and students in small discussion-based seminar style classroom settings, facilitated by a lecturer is recommended as a more personal and interactive approach to the pedagogy. There is empirical evidence to suggest that students learn better by doing (Aleven and Koedinger, 2002; Christensen, Johnson and Horn, 2010) through trial and error (Breiseth, 1983) and by actively engaging/participating in the pedagogy (Elliott and Reynolds, 2014) rather than being 'passive within the learning environment' (Crosling, Heagney and Thomas, 2009:11). During the conduct of my case-studies, a student provided the following perspective on the small classroom interactions:

> *"...because of the small classes we are not just being lectured to constantly. It's more a lot of those classes are more discussion based, so everybody has an input which helps in learning more" (Student No. 4 response, September 2015)*

The recommended small class-room sizes will also allow for more personal interaction between lecturers and students and between students and their peers as well as individual attention and engagement of students which makes learning more

meaningful (Loughran, 2002). Another student provided a perspective on what it meant to engage in participative pedagogies in a small classroom setting:

> *"when you have the small sizes, you are actually a student; so professors get to know you and they get to know where you come from and how you learn, how you understand and I think that the concept of the professor being able to know how you learn helps them adapt the lessons and what they are teaching to you personally" (Student No. 4 response, September 2015).*

The participative pedagogy in a classroom setting is supported by Elliott and Reynolds (2014) who argue that "interaction between students, and between students and lecturers, in making choices and decisions and being asked to work together within collaborative arrangements involves the students in processes which are more varied than in more didactic settings" (p. 312). A curriculum committee involving students and faculty will be set up to design the curriculum. The model will allow for flexibility and creativity in the classroom and it is recommended that the pedagogy addresses practical approaches to writing (essays, reports, memoranda, proposals); in order to help students develop convincing and constructive arguments; group-based activities to foster team work (Elliott and Reynolds, 2014); an emphasis on classroom debates and presentations to develop students oratorical skills and to engage with the subject matter and simulated interviews with students as a form of work-based knowledge (Shay, 2013).

The pedagogy will involve a work component in which students will be involved in a part-time practical work programme during their time at the heterodox higher education institution and will be awarded credits as part of their overall academic studies. The work programme will be undertaken in collaboration with affiliated member organisations of the heterodox model operating within the social economy and within the heterodox higher education institution itself, to help students develop leadership qualities, work ethics, and problem-solving skills as well as to reduce administrative costs by allowing students to contribute to the development of an institution that is member-owned and which they can be proud to call their own. During the conduct of this research the work programme has proven to be very effective according to students and the approaches to the pedagogy as outlined above will make students well rounded individuals and should instil self-confidence, leadership and effective communication skills for a life beyond higher education.

The focus of the heterodox model is students and ensuring that they receive the best educational experience. In that regard the approach to curriculum development will be collaborative, involving students, faculty members, retired academics and representatives from the affiliated member organisations at the regional level. This strategy will allow for a bottom up approach to teaching and learning, and allow all parties to take ownership of the curriculum development process (Leathwood and O'Connell, 2003). The curriculum will include cooperative education (cooperative, law, cooperative management, general cooperative enterprise education as a form of business). Studies related to mutual societies, member-owned trust organisations and other social economy enterprises will also be incorporated into the curriculum to allow students choices in pursuing those types of business ventures upon graduation. It is

important that a wide range of other subjects be included in the curriculum for diversity and to attract students, thereby allowing them to branch out into other fields of endeavour such as education, nursing, agriculture, social work and so on. The model will undertake extensive applied and basic research into social economy enterprises in order to raise awareness of the important social and economic benefits of these member-owned enterprises to their members, stakeholders and to the wider society, as well as to encourage their establishment and development. More specifically, the curriculum framework will be comprehensive in its teaching and learning (Shay, 2013) involving an interrelatedness between the theoretical knowledge in the classroom and practical, hands-on experience to benefit all students - those who are academically inclined as well as those who are more technically oriented.

Finally because the model will be jointly owned by all stakeholders including students, students will be given a voice (democratically participate) in selecting faculty because they will ultimately be the ones interacting with lecturers on a daily basis and learning to foster professional relationships early during the recruitment stage will serve to enhance their educational experiences in the classroom.

Legislation and Regulation

In the UK and Australia there is already legislation in place to support the formation and development of cooperatives and trust organisations. The International Cooperative Alliance provides a voice for cooperatives on a global level. However there is still need for a greater understanding of the purpose and governance model of these different forms of social economy enterprises to allow for the development of government

policies that will further accelerate their expansion. The hybrid heterodox higher education institution model will require buy-in at the level of policy-makers in different jurisdictions. In the case of the UK, the Higher Education and Research Act, 2017 has created the enabling environment to allow more entrants into the higher education sector thus facilitating the ease of entry of heterodox HEI models.

Cooperatives and trust organisations are social orders and their non-profit maximisation nature means that persons get involved not for economic gains but for social benefits and community development. This thesis therefore, proposes a new sphere of social responsibility which seeks to provide tertiary education to as many persons as possible and particularly the under-represented who would be provided free education. The proposed heterodox higher education institution based on a hybrid model is a mechanism within the social economy that I am advancing to educate the populace. However, in order to support the idea of a hybrid model and facilitate its implementation and effectiveness, it is recommended that the enabling environment be created within jurisdictions.

The regulatory arm which is the registrar/department of cooperatives in many jurisdictions including each state and territory in Australia would play a role in supporting the heterodox model and ensuring that the heterodox model upholds the principles, values and legislation governing cooperative enterprises and trust societies and that the model observes its moral and social obligations to the wider public as a social compact. In the case of the UK, there is no regulatory body for cooperatives. While the 1965 cooperative law and other pieces of cooperative legislation were consolidated under the Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014,

(Source: Cooperatives UK, 2018), cooperatives are registered by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) which is a financial regulatory body, and also the registering authority for societies in the UK. If a cooperative wanted to register they would have to do so with the FCA using one of the business models (Source: Cooperatives UK, 2018). While the FCA is not a regulatory body for societies (social economy enterprises), it could exercise its statutory powers if a society was not operating in accordance with the relevant registration requirements for a society (FCA, Finalised Guidance, 2015:76).

Of equal importance to the regulatory framework being proposed for the heterodox model, is that the Ministry of Education/Department for Education or accreditation body plays a key regulatory role in ensuring that professional and ethical standards are observed and that the quality of education received by students is maintained at a very high standard. In the UK, HEIs are regulated by and must be registered with the Office for Students (OfS), having assumed that responsibility in 2018 under the Higher Education and Research Act of 2017. In many countries including Australia, HE falls within the purview of the Ministry/Department of Education which is also charged with the responsibility for regulating and ensuring quality and standards of their educational programmes are maintained. In the UK the body with responsibility for maintaining standards is the Quality Assurance Agency. The role of government in maintaining standards and professionalism will serve two purposes. Firstly, that the interest of students and professional standards of the heterodox model are safeguarded. Secondly, it is the expectation that the establishment of similar alternative initiatives among social economy enterprises will be supported, encouraged and promoted at the level of the political directorate as an option for social and economic development, moving forward.

At the institutional level, strategic decisions of the cooperative/trust heterodox HEI model will be taken and ratified by stakeholders (general membership) at annual general meetings (AGMs). An executive body of the members will be democratically appointed by the general membership to implement the broad policies of the AGM. This body will comprise students, faculty, staff, parents, a representative of the registrar/department of cooperatives as well as a representative of the Ministry of Education/Office for Students. Additionally, an independent audit/supervisory committee appointed and accountable to the general membership will be appointed to oversee that the governance body carries out its mandate in the best interest of stakeholders, students and the wider region that it serves, and that all funds are being used prudently for the intended purpose of educating students.

The audit/supervisory committee will include a small spectrum of members within the wider region in which it operates and will comprise retired academics, auditors, students and parents from among the general membership and community as well as a representative from the registrar/department of cooperatives appointed from among the regional states. The involvement of students at all levels of the institutional structure will ensure self-governance of the heterodox model, develop leadership and other soft skills among students and provide them with a voice in the administration of their education.

Having proposed this heterodox model, I am fully aware that there could be limitations within different national contexts in making these forms of social economy models operational and they will have to be adapted accordingly, as they will be expected to operate within the stipulated state regulatory framework and some of the legal requirements (such as independent external third party on governance and government

funding mechanism) may appear to challenge the cooperative principles. In the UK, the new regulatory environment provides certain requirements that must be adhered to in order for the model or any new provider to be given official recognition. Under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, new providers must be registered with the OfS in order to be officially recognised as a higher education institution, to be able to award degrees, to be eligible for grant funding and benefit from the student financial support system as well as to receive a Tier 4 sponsorship licence[28]. Additionally a new HE provider would, inter alia, be required to provide the OfS with a 'self-assessment' that include information on its management and governance arrangements, the type of institution, a business plan to determine the financial viability and sustainability, a quality assurance plan, a student protection plan, and the approach to ensuring compliance with consumer protection law (OfS, Regulatory Advice 3 of 2018, pp. 5-31), bearing in mind that students have been recast as consumers.

The next chapter brings to a climax the major findings of the research undertaken to shape an understanding of the current hegemonic practices in higher education and which led to the proposal for heterodox forms of HEIs in terms of ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure as an alternative pathway for under-represented students. The chapter is divided as follows: Section 8.1 provides a summary of the main findings and the theoretical contribution of the study. Section 8.2 considers the implications for policy and practice. Section 8.3 examines the contribution to knowledge while Section 8.4 provides the limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, what could have been done differently as well as the next step. Finally, Section 8.5 provides some reflection on the research process.

[28] A UK higher education institution that is licenced to sponsor migrant students to study in the UK

Chapter 8

Implications, Recommendations and Conclusion

8.1 Summary of the Findings and Theoretical Contribution

The central aim of this study has been to explore heterodox forms of higher education institutions, in the context of the intensification of the neoliberal forms in the UK and Australia.

In doing so I hope to make a theoretical contribution to the body of literature on alternative university forms. In developing this research I have been drawn to the realisation that while students have been included within the framework of many writers in the field, the primary focus has been skewed towards a model that works for scholars and academics in the context of the current higher education climate. This study takes the opposite approach by seeking to place the needs of students at the forefront of higher education and in so doing ensure that students from under-privileged backgrounds receive the right to free higher education. In Chapter 7, I presented the framework of the proposed heterodox HEI model and have argued that a heterodox model that is democratically and beneficially owned by students, academics and other stakeholders might enhance students' educational experiences in terms of access and pedagogy.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the UK and Australia have been chosen for this study for two reasons. First, this research is part of a wider European Commission and Marie Skłodowska-Curie sponsored project called UNIKE (Universities in the Knowledge

Economy), which seeks to compare developments in Europe and the Asia-Pacific rim in terms of the changing roles and scope of universities in emerging global knowledge economies. Secondly, these countries are sufficiently similar to make comparison possible, but offer different regional, legal and economic contexts for HEIs.

To accomplish this aim I followed two courses of action. Firstly, I sought to answer subsidiary questions (i) and (ii) through an in-depth understanding of (i) "what are the current forms of university ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure in the UK and Australia?" and to determine (ii) "what are the consequences of these regimes for students access and experiences?" The results of this study which first followed a series of in-depth interviews with senior government officials and senior executives/officials in higher education in the UK and Australia are contained in Chapter 5. The results support the changing face of higher education in the UK and Australia, as part of a more global phenomenon that is becoming isomorphic.

The results also reveal that interviewees do not believe that their current practices are synonymous with that of corporate businesses. This is despite the fact that the findings supported the practices of increased competition among providers; a focus on international students as an export market and international strategic businesses to generate revenue; universities have become more complex global businesses that handle billions of pounds/dollars; and consensus among interviewees that this unprecedented operation necessitated more sophisticated management personnel than what existed in the past.

The findings further revealed that the practices in universities support the ongoing discourse that these HE institutions have become neo-liberalised, adopting the model of the private sector under new managerialism or New Public Management, a strategy for reform that was introduced by Commonwealth governments in the 1980s (Sutton, 2008). The market model that now encompasses the HE system is a consequence of governments curtailed funding policies and is reflected in the recasting of students as customers rather than partners. A product centric approach to education has been adopted, that place emphasis on research and courses that 'sell'. Yet there has been no scientific evidence to suggest that the pedagogical approach in a neo-liberal environment, or the quality of education received today has enhanced students experiences any more than it did prior to the 1980s HE market reform.

What is certain and a clear outcome of HE reform is the sharp increases in tuition fees in the UK and Australia that has encouraged a culture of debt among future generations. Likewise, politicians who continue to exaggerate the increase in the employment rate among graduates when Chapter 2 and Chapter 6 of this thesis reveal that many graduates find themselves in low paying jobs that are not suitable for a graduate, while employers continue to question the relevance of the education that universities provide to students (Harvey, 2000; Mourshed, Farrell, and Barton, 2013). Even more concerning is that students' talents and innovative skills are exploited by profit-seeking businesses who utilize their professional services pro bono (zero hour contracts) under the guise of an internship, while interest continues to be compounded on student loans even as private employers retain all profits that have been realized from the toil of exploited graduates. In other words subsidiary questions (i) and (ii) demonstrated close similarities in the responses and raised four main issues:

- Perpetuation of students fees as it brings in much needed revenue
- Recruitment of international students since they boost the economy and supplement university incomes
- Research and collaboration
- Universities are not behaving like corporations but merely trying to survive

The second course of action involved grounding my research with theories of social constructionism by undertaking case-studies of Unity University, Gramuco University, Davena College and Batista College, to answer the principal research question: "How do heterodox higher education institutional forms differ from the orthodox university model in relation to ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure?" These case-studies provided insight into mainstreaming the deviances into the proposed heterodox model, thus making an important contribution to alternative ways of configuring higher education for the enhancement of students' educational experiences.

The findings in Chapter 6 reveal that a holistic approach to the pedagogy was adopted in the case-study institutions, providing students with both knowledge and practical work experience on campus or in the community. I have argued in Chapter 7 for a pedagogy that is based not only on theory but which is very practical in nature to ensure that students receive an all rounded education and launch out into the world with confidence, equipped with the knowledge and skills to be successful leaders in their fields of endeavour. I have also argued for students to take ownership of their learning through active engagement in curriculum development together with faculty staff thereby becoming co-producers of their own knowledge (Neary and Winn, 2009) and

for students to play a role in the recruitment of the faculty staff who will be teaching them. I further argued for the disbandment of large lecture theatres which serves to disconnect lecturers from students and instead, a focus on small classrooms to encourage wider discussion and participation of students. Also the involvement of students in skills development and job training organised for students as part of the pedagogical framework.

Students involved in the case-studies unanimously expressed that a practical and hands-on approach to the pedagogy provided them with a much more fulfilling and rounded educational experience that would equip them for a life beyond the university than a strictly theoretical approach to education. Emanating from the findings was students' beneficial ownership in two institutions and their democratic participation in institutional governance and operations. Likewise a free tuition scholar and full scholar was provided by two other institutions. The ability of these non-traditional case-study HE institutions to turn out graduates that continue to occupy prominent and distinguished positions in society, mean that the idea of students' beneficial ownership of their HEI and democratic participation in governance and control, of heterodox forms of HEIs as provided in Chapter 7, is a real possibility. A possibility that could provide an alternative to the neoliberal higher education institutional forms, increase the participation of under-privileged students by means of free education and provide a more satisfying educational experience for all students, when they work collaboratively and in partnership with academics, employees and other stakeholders.

8.2 Implications for Policy and Practice

In view of the current market climate in contemporary public higher education institutions, there is urgent need for policymakers to create an environment that will allow for a rethinking of the way in which public HEIs are configured and financed and which will encourage the establishment of democratic HEI models at the broader regional level involving the active participation of students, academics and workers in the governance and management of the institute. A heterodox model will allow for a pedagogical framework that is collaborative and an inclusive learning environment in which academics are able to optimally utilise their talents for the benefit of the institution. Students will develop leadership, practical and other soft skills that will serve them well into the future.

There has been much debate and little action at the level of policymakers about opening up access to HE for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. The time is right for this to become a reality and it can only work if policies are in place to provide students from that strata of the society, with full scholarship support from public funds during their enrolment in HEIs.

Notwithstanding the second paragraph above, there is an urgent need for policymakers to consider a review of tuition fees by at least 50%. This will significantly reduce the debt burden for students and their parents as well as provide many more students from less privileged or low socio-economic backgrounds a chance at a higher education.

Another implication for practice of findings in this thesis is the need for a re-engineering of the education system. In doing so, policymakers should 'really' put

students' first, by re-examining the curriculum and course content of HEIs to ensure that students receive a holistic educational experience that is both practical and theoretical and which will prepare them with the right skillset and expertise to take up their rightful place in an ever changing global knowledge economy, upon graduation. If meaningful changes are to take place in the public higher education system, then governments must act and they must do so expeditiously.

8.3 Contribution to Knowledge

The study sets out to synthesise knowledge of current dominant forms of university ownership/control, financing, governance and organisational structures in order to determine the implications of the constitutional form on students. More substantively, the study contributes to an understanding of social economy enterprises and their salient features that could be used to create heterodox models for universities in order to enhance students' educational experiences. The HE sector in the UK and Australia have been excellent sites for this inquiry as public universities in these two countries like many others, have become marketised and entrepreneurial.

The main contribution of the thesis is a proposed heterodox framework or a set of resources of hope that communities, countries or regions could use imaginatively to set up alternative HEI models (see Chapter 7). The model will make access to and affordability of higher education a reality for the under-privileged and will put more direct decision-making over their educational affairs in the hands of students. The research further contributes to the body of knowledge on alternative university forms. Additionally, this research will bring social economy enterprises into the higher education debate and promote them as alternative models for organising HEIs. It does

so through the first ever comprehensive case-study conducted among four alternative higher education institutions within the social economy. By undertaking the case-studies the thesis makes an important contribution to knowledge *empirically, theoretically, methodologically, practically and pedagogically*. Empirically I identified and provided a detailed analysis of the key characteristics of these case-studies as well as the experiences of students, faculty and workers within them. Theoretically, I make the connections between the case-studies and the key theoretical themes that have emerged from my analysis in conversation with the wider scholarly literature. Methodologically, I have provided ways of understanding alternative forms of HEIs by drawing on lessons learnt from the case-study institutions for thinking about heterodox forms of HEIs that could actually have resonance for the orthodox context. Further, I identified wider implications for practice and education policy from the case-studies, both for mainstream orthodox forms of HEIs and for developing heterodox forms.

One of the lessons learnt from the case-studies is that it is possible to set up HE institutions that work in the interest of the public good and positively transform communities by providing students, particularly those from under-represented backgrounds, with free higher education. The case-studies also demonstrate that it is feasible to provide a pedagogy that develop students holistically (academically, professionally, and by instilling values of a life of service to community). By allowing students to be employed members within the institutional environment as part of their full scholarship, they will provide a sense of duty and contribute to the life of the institution while acquiring work ethics, professional skills and practical experience necessary to give back to society and also to give back to the heterodox model. This will therefore enable the model to maintain a flat structure, keep operational costs down

and use the savings from operating costs to provide many more under-represented students with free education while also significantly reducing the cost of education for all other students. Thus, pedagogically, the heterodox model promotes a framework that is collaborative and practices democracy in learning by engaging students in strategic decision-making within the institution. The case-studies further reveal that it is possible to have a more participative management and governance structure involving students, faculty and staff working collaboratively together as partners in controlling and managing the day-to-day operations of their institution and in which students are beneficial owners. A higher education institution exist for the benefit of students and as such their involvement in shaping its direction is self-evidently important in a non-commodified education system. Thus from my analysis of both the orthodox and case-study institutions, I have developed my own conceptual framework of a heterodox model that could have practical implications and resonance for the orthodox forms, by drawing on the salient features of the case-study institutions, and that could be brought into the mainstream as a contribution to thinking about different ways of reconfiguring HEIs for the benefit of students.

8.4 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Research

Limitations

A limitation of the study is that it is based on in-depth individual interviews conducted with senior executives/officials of just two orthodox universities and three umbrella bodies of HEIs in the UK and Australia, as well as one umbrella body of social economy

enterprises. It is also based on case-studies of four relatively small heterodox institutions in the context of higher education. However, they offer important lessons and principles for re-organising HE or creating new forms of HEIs in more democratic, collaborative and participative ways and in which stakeholders (students, academics, workers') have beneficial ownership.

The study examines how heterodox higher education institutional forms might differ from orthodox university forms in relation to ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure and how these might provide different educational experiences for students in terms of access and pedagogy. The findings may also be limited in that interviews were not conducted with students and academics in contemporary orthodox higher educational institutions, except for the pilot phase involving a small focus group of students, but this could be the focus of another study. A further limitation of the study is that I was unable to provide a more in-depth account of Gramuco's impact on students and the community because the case-study of this institution was undertaken at a time when it was still in its infancy stage. However Gramuco could be the subject of further research. Additionally, I was unable to undertake one of the proposed case-studies of a UK employee-owned and operated private organisation, thus limiting the representativeness of the research. This was despite several official correspondence with a senior contact person who reassured me that my request was being considered. In the absence of a firm commitment from the organisation, I had to take a decision to move on because my data collection had to be completed within a set timeframe based on the terms of the project under which this research was funded.

How Might I have done the Research Differently?

I was generally satisfied with the manner in which the research progressed and there is not much I would wish to have changed in terms of my field work. Having said this, there is always room for improvement and in retrospect if I had to do it all over again I would be more careful in crafting the research questions so as not to be overly optimistic but to ensure that I capture the amount of data necessary to complete the thesis within the stipulated timeframe. I say this because I had to change my research questions three times along the way for better focus and to make them more impactful. Towards the final leg of the thesis I also reduced the four broad areas (access, cost, pedagogy and curriculum) relating to implication on students' experiences in one of the subsidiary questions to two (access and pedagogy), to allow me to delve deeper into the subject. This is after I had already collected data for the four categories

I would also commence the process of transcribing the individual interviews and focus group interviews a lot earlier and more persistently. This is because I had several challenges in getting the data transcribed on time. Individuals who were paid to get them done had their own problems which delayed progress and resulted in me having to identify new persons on two separate occasions. I would further contract the services of a professional company rather than individuals to assist with transcribing the less sensitive interviews/focus groups.

Additionally, I could have concentrated on three case studies instead of four, because I underestimated the duration of time required for transcription of the huge volume of data collected in order to ensure the progress of the study according to the original timetable.

Recommendations

As previously indicated, this study was conducted among four small higher education institutions in the social economy. Despite the well documented success stories of the existing 'stand-alone' models (Newell, 2015; Wilson, 2006; Wright, Greenwood and Boden, 2011) and their contribution towards the public good, they are yet to be accepted and adopted more globally. Given that the issue of scale has been an area of concern among these alternative models, it would be useful in the future to undertake further research to determine whether a heterodox model could be sustainable in a larger scale university. However, to address the issue of scale I have recommended in Chapter 7, that the heterodox model seek to partner with as many social economy enterprises as possible beyond its local community, a model similar to that of the FairShares (Riley-Duff, 2015).

Two of the case-study institutions have demonstrated that people are prepared to contribute financially towards the establishment and success of a HEI in which every student with academic potential from a less privileged background benefits from higher education and this is an area to be explored in reconfiguring HEIs. Further research involving students in contemporary higher education is also recommended to gain an insight into their educational experiences in terms of access and pedagogy. Finally, in order to operationalise the heterodox model in different country contexts with degree awarding powers and accredited qualifications, it is expected that there will be compliance with the national legal regulatory framework applicable to HE within the country/region in which the model will be established.

Next Step

In the short term, I intend to publish a series of monographs from my research findings of the case-studies and would also consider the possibility of developing the thesis into a book. Meanwhile emanating from my research, during the UNIKE final conference held in Copenhagen in 2016, is a group of more than 40 critical scholars and researchers that have been established on ResearchGate with the aim of conducting action research that seeks to recreate public universities, emphasise their role as an accessible public good and contribute to the restoration of participatory democracy. To this end, the group discussed our intent to establish an alternative university model in the UK and this is an idea that I would like to take forward with the group, particularly now that the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, makes it a lot easier for new and innovative alternative providers to enter higher education. In the next section I provide some reflection on the research process.

8.5 Afterword - Reflections on the Research Process

The conduct of this research has been one of the most rewarding and life-changing experiences of my academic life, having followed the path of a very instructive and interesting journey.

In conducting a qualitative study, I have strengthened my knowledge of qualitative research methods and my ability to confidently conduct qualitative research. I also met and connected with many different people along the way, gaining friends in the process, and I now have a more profound understanding of the challenges within contemporary higher education and the impact on students in particular. I have come to realise that there is a big movement of people in different parts of the world who support my cause

for heterodox university forms of ownership, governance, financing and management. I also have a better appreciation for the social economy and how cooperatives and other social economy enterprises can make a bigger social impact in the area of alternative forms of higher education institutions.

The journey for me was not without its challenges. There were times when the road itself felt so lonely, particularly in the third year of my writing, when I was faced with three major setbacks one of which was supervision and having to change director of studies at this critical juncture in my thesis. My passion about the subject being researched and the conviction that real changes were necessary in contemporary higher education kept me going but this was not enough, as the enemy kept pressing from the outside for me to give up. Just at the moment when I felt like 'abandoning ship' because of my many challenges, I heard this still voice whispered to me. "You are not alone. I am with you all the way" and I readily responded, "Lord, I am here by no accident and I will see this through to the end". My supervisors also strongly believed in me and constantly encouraged me with the words "you can do it" – I know you can". Thank God I pressed on, because now I have accomplished my desired end and I am proud of myself and my achievement in completing my PhD. To God be the Glory! The next step is for me to make the heterodox higher education institution a reality and I look forward to taking the idea back to the Caribbean as a starting point.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1

Business School
Southlands College
80 Roehampton Lane, London, UK
SW15 5SL

Tel: 020 8392 3000 (switchboard)

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

(To undertake Case-Study)

Title of Research Project: Heterodox forms of university ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure

Brief Description of Research Project, and What Participation Involves:

I am conducting a PhD research on Heterodox forms of university ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure. The aim of this research is to explore different university forms and how these can provide different educational outcomes for students, increase access to higher education and reduce tuition fees. Consenting on behalf of your organisation, I seek your permission to undertake a case study of the organisation, for a period of one week to understand your governance structure and how certain features of your operations can be recommended for higher education reform. I will compile a report of my findings and send you a copy of the draft for approval before publication.

Investigator Contact Details:

Name: Catherine Butcher
Department: Business School
University Address: Roehampton Lane, London, United Kingdom
Postcode: SW15 5PU
Email: Catherine.Butcher@roehampton.ac.uk

Telephone: (+44)07462896834

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason, although if I do so I understand that my data might still be used in a collated form. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings, and that data will be collected and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and with the University's Data Protection Policy.

On Behalf of ……..

Signature ……

Date ……

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.) However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Head of Department.

Director of Studies Contact Details:

Name: Professor Rebecca Boden
University Address: University of Roehampton, Roehampton Lane, SW15 5PU, London, United Kingdom
Email: *Rebecca.boden@roehampton.ac.uk*
Telephone: *(+44) 7721622693)*

Head of Department Contact Details:

Name: Professor Julie Hall
University Address: *University of Roehampton, Roehampton Lane, SW15 5PU, London, United Kingdom*
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Appendix 2

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SW15 5SL
Tel: 020 8392 3000 (switchboard)
Fax: 020 8392 3730
www.roehampton.ac.uk

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

(Focus Group Meeting with faculty)

Title of Research Project: Heterodox forms of university ownership/control, governance, financing and organisation structure

Brief Description of Research Project, and What Participation Involves:

I am conducting a PhD research on Heterodox forms of university ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure. The aim of this research is to explore different university forms and how these can provide different educational outcomes for students, increase access to higher education and reduce tuition fees. I seek your permission to participate in a focus group meeting comprising faculty staff to discuss the current changes within public higher education and what are the key issues that you face working in a social economy organisation. The focus group meeting will take place at the University and will comprise six persons for a maximum period of one hour and a half. I intend to record these sessions and will transcribe and send you a copy of the transcript for approval.

Investigator Contact Details:

Name: Catherine Butcher
Department: Business School
University Address: Roehampton Lane, London, United Kingdom
Postcode: SW15 5PU
Email: Catherine.Butcher@roehampton.ac.uk
Telephone: (+44)07462896834

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason, although if I do so I understand that my data might still be used in a collated form. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings, and that data will be collected and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Name …….

Signature …….

Date …….

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.) However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Head of Department.

Director of Studies Contact Details:

Name: Professor Rebecca Boden
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Email: *Rebecca.boden@roehampton.ac.uk*
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Head of Department Contact Details:

Name: Professor Julie Hall
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Appendix 3

Business School
Southlands College
80 Roehampton Lane, London, UK
SW15 5SL
Tel: 020 8392 3000 (switchboard)
Fax: 020 8392 3730
www.roehampton.ac.uk

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

(Focus Group Meeting with Students)

Title of Research Project: Heterodox forms of university ownership/control, governance, financing and organisation structure

Brief Description of Research Project, and What Participation Involves:

I am conducting a PhD research on Heterodox forms of university ownership/control, governance, financing and organisational structure. The aim of this research is to explore different university forms and how these can provide different educational outcomes for students, increase access to higher education and reduce tuition fees. I seek your permission to participate in a focus group meeting comprising students to discuss the current changes within public higher education and what are the key issues that you face studying in a social economy organisation. The focus group meeting will take place at the University and will comprise six persons for a maximum period of one hour. I intend to record these sessions and will transcribe and send you a copy of the transcript for approval.

Investigator Contact Details:

Name: Catherine Butcher
Department: Business School
University Address: Roehampton Lane, London, United Kingdom
Postcode: SW15 5PU
Email: Catherine.Butcher@roehampton.ac.uk
Telephone: (+44)07462896834

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason, although if I do so I understand that my data might still be used in a collated form. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings, and that data will be collected and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Name …….

Signature ……

Date ……

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.) However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Head of Department.

Director of Studies Contact Details:

Name: Professor Rebecca Boden
University Address: University of Roehampton, Roehampton Lane, SW15 5PU, London, United Kingdom
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Appendix 4

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PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

(Individual interviews with government and contemporary HE officials)

Title of Research Project: Heterodox forms of university ownership/control, governance, financing and organisation structure

Brief Description of Research Project, and What Participation Involves:

I am conducting a PhD research on Heterodox forms of university ownership, governance, financing and organisational structure. The aim of this research is to explore different university forms and how these can provide different educational outcomes for students, increase access to higher education and reduce tuition fees. I seek your permission for an interview at your office, to discuss the policy context and to get your perspective of current and alternative university forms. The duration of the interview is 45 minutes to one hour long during which time, I will record these sessions, will transcribe and send you a copy of the transcript for approval.

Investigator Contact Details:

Name: Catherine Butcher
Department: Business School
University Address: Roehampton Lane, London, United Kingdom
Postcode: SW15 5PU
Email: Catherine.Butcher@roehampton.ac.uk
Telephone: (+44)07462896834

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point without giving a reason, although if I do so I understand that my data might still be used in a collated form. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings, and that data will be collected and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and with the University's Data Protection Policy.

Name ……

Signature ……

Date ……

Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.) However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Head of Department.

Director of Studies Contact Details:

Name: Professor Rebecca Boden
University Address: University of Roehampton, Roehampton Lane, SW15 5PU, London, United Kingdom
Email: *Rebecca.boden@roehampton.ac.uk*
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Name: Professor Julie Hall
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Appendix 5

Sample Official Correspondence to Participating Institutions

Dear _____

Thanks again for agreeing to facilitate my site visit of your institution. This email serves to provide some guidance regarding my proposed visit.

What I am doing in my research is going around the world looking for 'spaces of hope' by that I mean alternative models of teaching and learning, ownership, governance and financing models that I can study analyse and see how these unique features can be incorporated in developing a heterodox university model that will offer a different and more socially inclusive experience for students in terms of access, and pedagogy.

In that regard your institution offers a very special model based on recommendations and I would be happy to speak with management, faculty, staff and students as well as to observe students in a classroom setting to get a better understanding of what the institution is doing and its success stories.

The data that I am collecting is specific to my research and I will be bound by any ethical and/or confidentiality issues that you may have.

While at your institution I would be very happy for **one or two focus group meetings with students and academic staff**. Each focus group should consist of a maximum of 7 persons. The focus group will involve me interviewing the students together in one group to understand their learning experiences and to get responses to questions around the curriculum, access to the institution, and other questions around their experiences at the institution. It will also provide an opportunity for feedback from students on my proposed model.

I would also be happy for a meeting with **senior management,** the **head of finance**, the **head of each faculty** and the **person from each faculty with responsibility for teaching and learning** to gain an overview of the institution to discuss issues of ownership, the culture and values of the institution, governance arrangements, the structure of the institution, how it sustains itself, curriculum among other issues.

As I have explained before, these issues are to enable me to design an appropriate heterodox higher education institution model that could be adapted and adopted in country context. My visit should not be longer than one to two weeks and I will be very happy for your facilitation in this regard.

Attached to this correspondence is a simple draft programme. You may wish to adjust accordingly to reflect anything of interest that will assist me with my research.

Sincerely,

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